

THE MILITARY AND POLICE FORCES OF THE GULF STATES

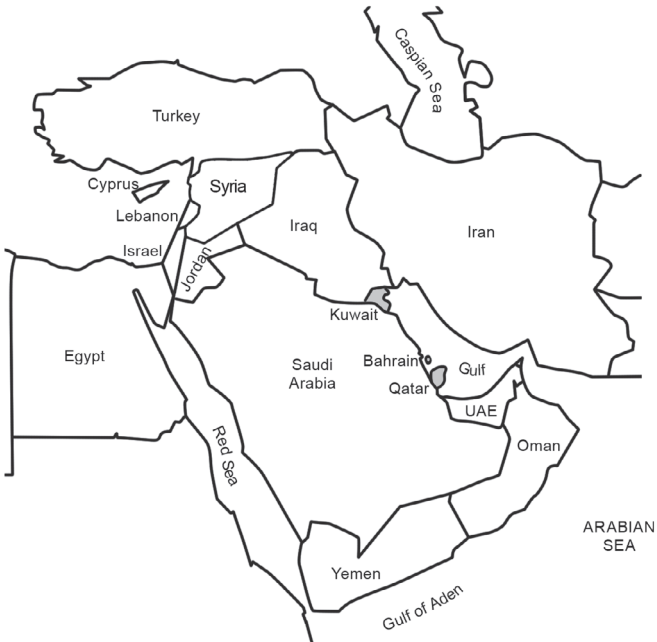
VOLUME 4: BAHRAIN, KUWAIT, QATAR 1921–1980



Athol Yates & Cliff Lord

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DEDICATION

The authors would like to thank our wives Jacinta Nelligan and Lynne Lord who have shown outstanding patience and support throughout the writing of these books.



ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

<i>agal</i>	rope worn on top of the <i>shemagh</i> derived from a camel hobble
Amir	an alternate spelling of Emir
AMX	Atelier de Construction d'Issy-les-Moulineaux
BAC	British Aircraft Corporation
BAPCO	Bahrain Petroleum Company
BDF	Bahrain Defence Force
BPS	Bahrain Public Security
caubeen	an Irish beret
CNU	Committee for National Unity
<i>durrie</i>	sleeping mat
Emir	prince
GHQ	General Headquarters
<i>Havaldar</i>	Sergeant
HMS	Her/His Majesty's Ship or Her/His Majesty's Station
HQ	Headquarters
KSSS	Kuwait State Security Service
<i>lathi</i>	1m long bamboo cane
<i>Naik</i>	Corporal
<i>Natur</i>	An unarmed watchman
NCO	non-commissioned officer
putties	strip of khaki cloth covering the lower part of the leg from the ankle to the knee
RAF	Royal Air Force
Sepoy	Soldier/Private
<i>shemagh</i>	Arab cloth headdress worn with or without an <i>agal</i>
SLR	Self Loading Rifle
SMLE	Short Magazine Lee Enfield
<i>souq</i>	market
<i>Subadar</i>	First lieutenant
UAE	United Arab Emirates

PREFACE

While all three small Gulf Arab states examined in this book – Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar – share a similar Arab, Islamic and tribal culture, the history of each of these states' militaries and police forces are unique. This reflects each state's geography, its rate of development, its demographics, the assertiveness of its neighbouring states, and broader geopolitical developments which had local impacts.

To tell the story of each states' security agencies from 1921 to 1980, it is necessary to describe these factors within a historical narrative. This provides the context for understanding the factors that drove the establishment of a particular security force and why it evolved in the way it did. Supporting the histories are considerable details about each security force, its size, structure and equipment.

Given the paucity of accurate information on the security forces of Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar, this book fills a significant gap in security history of the Arabian Gulf region – an area which has today become the economic and security centre of the Middle East.

Atthol Yates and Cliff Lord, 2023

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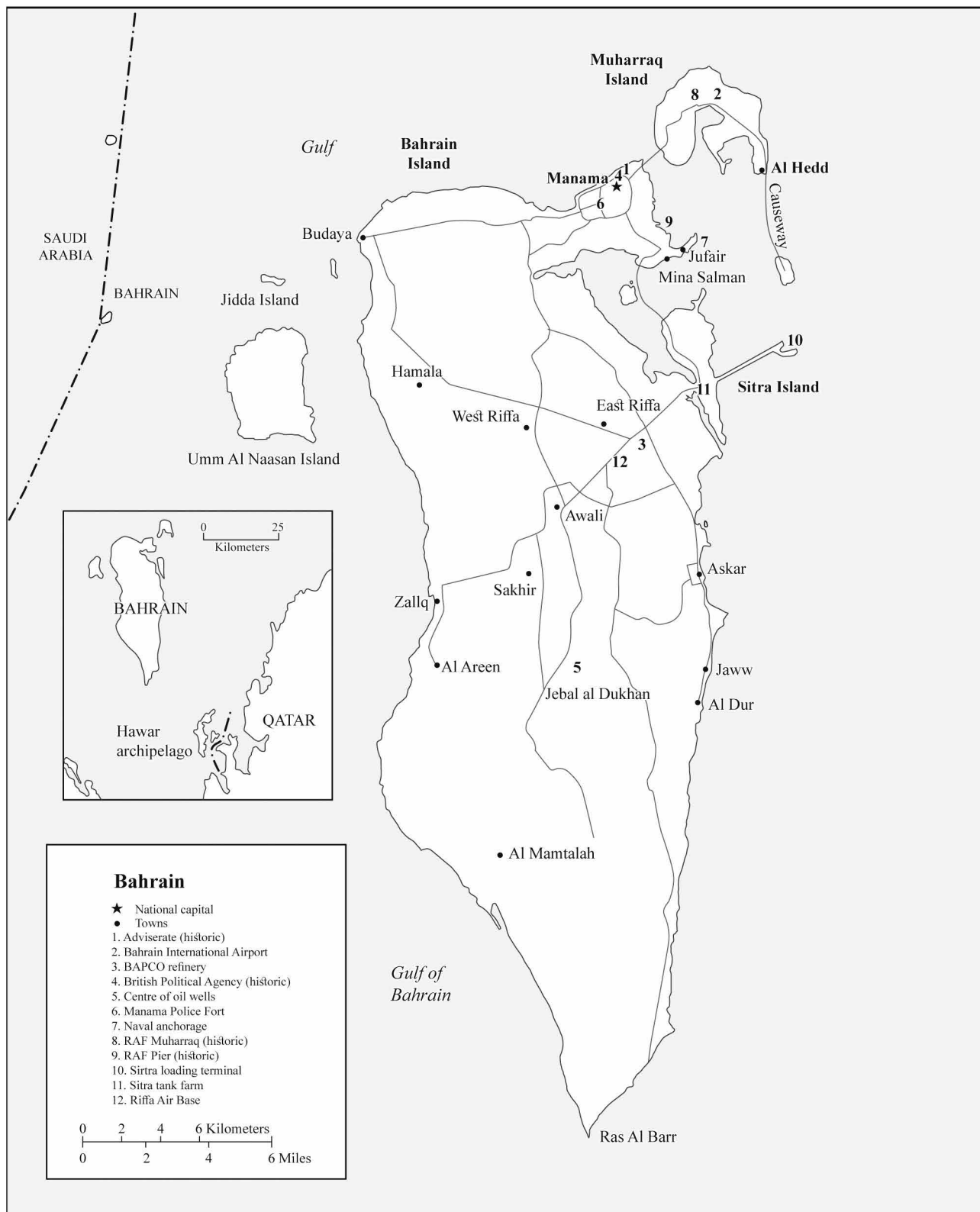
BAHRAIN

The country of Bahrain is a small, flat arid archipelago made up of around 40 islands. The state since the late 1700s has been ruled by a member of the Al Khalifa family, first as an absolute monarchy and after 1973 a form of constitutional monarchy.

The state's largest island is Bahrain Island which makes up nearly 85 percent of the country's total land area of about 710km². Bahrain's capital of Manama is located on this island's north-east. In 1941, a causeway was constructed which connected Manama with Muharraq Island, and in 1986, a causeway connecting Bahrain Island with Saudi Arabia. The most distant part of Bahrain is the Hawar archipelago which is a cluster of islands and islets lying some 19km south-west of Bahrain Island and just 2km off the Qatari mainland.

From the late 1800s until 1971, Bahrain was a protected state of Britain. During this time, the state was semi-independent with Britain being responsible for the state's external defence and foreign affairs. Internal state affairs were the responsibility of the ruler of Bahrain, except in areas where Britain's interests were threatened. Bahrain became increasingly important for Britain's global interests in the 1930s with the development of aircraft which could fly long-distance. Bahrain become an essential staging point along the Britain to India air route.

Britain's political power was exercised by the local British political representative, known as the Political Agent. He lived in Manama and reported to Britain's regional representative, the Political Resident Gulf. Historically, the Gulf was within British India's sphere of influence and so the Resident reported to New Delhi. With India's independence in 1947, the Resident reported directly to London. In 1948, his office, the British Residency, moved from Bushire in Iran to Bahrain. This made Bahrain the centre of British political power in the Gulf. The Political Resident had significant influence over the ruler of Bahrain as well as the other Gulf Arab rulers. This influence was based on British prestige, but if this was insufficient, then coercion in the form of shows of or actual use of British force were employed. The main mechanism for this was the Royal Navy's Gulf Squadron which had long been based in the Gulf. From 1935, the squadron's base was HMS *Jufair* east of Manama. If naval forces were insufficient or a sustained on-the-ground presence was required, British Indian and/or British Army forces could be brought in. The Second World War saw the British establish an RAF base on Muharraq Island.



Bahrain, 1980. (Map by Athol Yates)

Britain's military presence in Bahrain significantly expanded in 1961 as the operation to protect Kuwait from Iraq led to a British Army battalion becoming permanently stationed in Bahrain. Britain's decision to withdraw from Aden in 1966 resulted in Bahrain become Britain's key regional military base. In October 1967, a joint command headquarters was established in Bahrain to administer British forces in the region. British forces in Bahrain in the late 1960s peaked at 1,743 British Army personnel, a Royal Navy contingent of three destroyers/frigates and six mine countermeasure ships, and a Royal Air Force presence of two squadrons of Hunters,

one squadron of medium range transports and one flight of short-range transports.

In January 1968, Britain announced that by 1971 it would end its treaties of protection with Bahrain and the other Gulf Arab states. For Bahrain, this meant that within three years it would be fully responsible for its own defence and security arrangements. At that time, the greatest external threat to Bahrain was from Iran which claimed sovereignty over the state. While the Shah of Iran had recognised that Bahrain had little strategic value and that the claim was actually impeding improved relations with the Arab world,

Table 1: Rulers of Bahrain		
Dates of reign	Ruler*	Years of birth and death
1 December 1869 – 26 May 1923 (Abdicated)	Sheikh Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa	1848 – 1932
27 May 1923 – 20 February 1942	Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa	1872 – 1942
20 February 1942 – 2 November 1961	Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa	1894 – 1961
2 November 1961 – 6 March 1999	Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa	1931 – 1999
* Up to 1971, the ruler's title was formally <i>hakim</i> , meaning ruler in Arabic. From 1971, his title became <i>emir</i> . In 2002, the ruler's title became king.		

for domestic political reasons he needed to press for sovereignty. Following secret negotiations with Bahrain's ruler and Britain, plus getting support from Saudi Arabia and the US, a face-saving approach was agreed to. This involved the US sending a fact-finding mission to determine the attitude of Bahrainis to independence. The result was unsurprising – they wanted independence. This finding provided the Shah with a politically convenient way to end Iran's claim. Bahrain became a fully independent state on 15 August 1971.

At independence, British forces were withdrawn, and HMS *Jufair*, RAF Muharraq and the British Army's Hamala base were closed. The US Navy, which since the 1940s used facilities at HMS *Jufair*, moved into part of the base previously occupied by the Royal Navy.

The 1970s saw Bahrain face a series of internal security threats arising from domestic and foreign interests challenging the state's existing political structure. Subversive groups came from a range of leftist, pan-Arab, Arab nationalist and Shia fundamentalist positions, and insecurity was exacerbated in the early 1970s by efforts by the ruler to reform domestic political arrangements, the 1973 oil crisis and the 1973 Israeli-Arab war. While a constitution was introduced in 1973, due to threats to the monarchy, it was suspended in 1975 and the ruler centralised executive and legislative power under his control. The end of the decade saw increased domestic insecurity due to the spill-over from a range of geopolitical developments, notably the 1979 revolution in Iran and the 1980 Iran-Iraq war.

BAHRAIN AT THE START OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Bahrain in the early 1900s was a usual Gulf Arab state. Unlike neighbouring states where the ruler was a paramount sheikh and

society was tribally structured, Bahrain had more in common with a feudal state. The ruler, the Al Khalifa sheikhs and emirs (well-connected individuals given authority by the ruler over an area) had extensive powers over the people within their 'fiefdoms'. They could demand unpaid forced labour, apply collective punishment, reallocate land and levy poll taxes. Land was rented out and if taxes, rents and tributes were not met, the renters would be expelled or put into prison.

The ruler and the sheikhs/emirs relied on a combination of *fidawis* and *naturis* to provide the enforcement of their decisions and public safety. *Fidawis* were armed men who would physically enforce the decisions such as collecting monies, arresting, punishing, and rounding up males for forced labour. *Naturis* were generally unarmed urban watchmen who patrolled and guarded markets and streets so as to prevent crime, protect property and apprehend wrongdoers in both areas where the wealthy had their residences and in commercial areas of Manama, Muharraq and the pearling centre of Al Hedd.

Outside of areas under the direct control of the ruler and the sheikhs/emirs, the ruler's authority depended on allied Sunni tribes. The most powerful such tribe was the Al Dawasir. These lived mostly in the western side of the island centred at Budaiya and Zallaq towns, and were wealthy due to their ownership of pearling vessels. They exercised considerable autonomy and were exempt from a number of Bahraini taxes, such as the pearling diving tax. When the Al Dawasir had arrived in 1845, they expelled the Shia Arab Baharna living in the north-west of the island, pushing them into rural areas with their key villages being at Sitra and Aali. The Baharna are considered to be the original inhabitants of Bahrain and are part of

Table 2: Bahrain's Policing Leadership		
Dates	Name	Appointment
1924–25	Captain A.G. Campbell	Commanding Officer, Bahrain Levy Corps
1926–32	Captain T.H. Geake	Commanding Officer, Bahrain Levy Corps
1926–32	Captain L.S. Parke	Commandant, Bahrain State Police
Early 1920s–1936	Haji Salman bin Jasim	Superintendent, Municipal Police, and then State Police
1932–56	Charles Belgrave	Commandant, State Police
1939–61	Sheikh Khalifa bin Mohammed bin Isa Al Khalifa	Superintendent, State Police and after 1942, Chief of Police and Public Security
1961–67	Sheikh Mohammed bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa	Chief of Police and Public Security
1956–61	Colonel A.H. St. G. Hammersley	Commandant, State Police
1961–65	Colonel Robert H. Winder	Commandant, State Police
1966–80	Lt General Jim Bell	Commandant, State Police and after 1973, Director-General of Police
1973–2004	Sheikh Mohammad Bin Khalifa bin Hamad Al Khalifa	Minister of Interior

a large ethno-religious group who lived across Eastern Arabia. In addition to the Baharna, there are two other important Shia groups in Bahrain – the Ajam who were settlers with Persian heritage, and the Hasawi who have Arab heritage and came from Saudi Arabia. Sunnis in Bahrain can be divided into two main groups – those from Arab ancestry and migrated to Bahrain directly from other parts of Arabia, and those who had mostly Arab ancestry but migrated from southern Persia. The latter group are known as Huwala and their connections to their former homeland meant they mainly worked as merchant and traders.

In 1904 the population of Bahrain was around 100,000, of which some 50 percent were Shia and Sunni. The largest town was Manama, and of its 25,000 inhabitants some 60 percent were Shia and 40 percent Sunni. Manama also had a foreign population of 7,500, notably other Arabs, Indians, Persians, Balouch and Africans. At this time, the economy was based on pearl diving, fishing and date palms. Of these, the most important in terms of the economy and employment was pearling. Those who did the actual pearling work, the divers and the pullers, did not receive wages but a proportion of the profit from the ship's captain. This was frequently meagre due to malfeasance, such as the captain's undervaluing of the pearls and hence artificially lowering the profit. Divers and pullers were in a precarious position as they borrowed money from their ship's captain in order to live during the year, and hoped that their portion of the pearling catch would repay the debt. When this did not occur, the debt was carried over to the following year. As the debt was hereditary, not only they but their children could be trapped in debt bondage. The work was arduous and divers commonly suffered enduring ill health including respiratory problems, deafness and blindness. As will be seen, these health issues reduced the size of the local employment pool for the security forces when it needed to expand in the 1930s and 1940s.

THE 1920s AND THE MANAMA MUNICIPAL POLICE, THE BAHRAIN LEVY CORPS AND THE STATE POLICE

In 1919, the ruler of Bahrain was the 71-year-old Sheikh Isa ibn Ali Al Khalifa. Britain had been increasingly displeased with his autocratic rule and Bahrain's feudal system. Frustrated, the British authorities decided it was time to start modernising the state despite the wishes of the ruler. This could be done via the authority of an Order in Council which had been obtained a few years earlier. This both limited the powers of the ruler and gave the Political Resident what was in effect the power of a governor over a British colony. In 1918, Captain N.E. Bray was appointed as Political Agent in Bahrain and he 'advised' the ruler to introduce reforms.

One such reform adopted, which had importance for the history of Bahrain's police, was the establishment in 1919 of the Manama Municipality. One of its responsibilities was to provide security and safety, and this led to the establishment of the small Manama Municipal police force under the control of the Superintendent who reported to the Secretary to the Municipality. Absorbed into the Municipal Police were the *naturs* of Manama. The Municipal Police were unarmed except for truncheons. The Municipal Police would grow into a force of nearly 90 within five years. The Secretary to the Municipality, who in 1923 was Mohammad Sharif Awazi, was a Sunni Persian. The Municipal Police Superintendent was an Arab Shia Bahraini, Haji Salman bin Jasim. A large proportion of its members were Persian with many speaking no Arabic, with many of the rest being Baluchi who spoke neither Arabic nor Persian. The inability to communicate in Arabic caused both difficulties in

undertaking their activities and resentment with the Arab-speaking population.

Other reforms driven by the Political Agent included appointing to judicial councils members other than the ruling family and its allies, and establishing a Joint Court which allowed cases to be brought by foreigners against Bahrainis. These and other reforms were generally resented by the ruler, branches of the Al Khalifa family and Sunni tribal allies. They believed, correctly, that it would diminish their power, income and privilege. Conversely the Baharna and other lower social groups welcomed the changes but wanted faster reforms, including eliminating discriminatory taxes and their maltreatment. In February 1922, the Baharna protested in Manama with the ruler defusing it by agreeing to most of their demands. However, the ruler delayed implementing the reforms which angered the Baharna. Tensions escalated when disaffected members of the royal family attacked Baharna villages, as did elements of the Al Dawasir tribe.

Recognising that the ruler would continue to oppose reforms, the then Political Agent, Major Clive K. Daly, saw in the ruler's oldest son, Sheikh Hamad, a more reliable ruler. Pressure was applied to Sheikh Isa to abdicate, which he did in 1923. To eliminate the threat from the Dawasir and disaffected members of the Al Khalifa family, trials were held of those who attacked the Baharna. This resulted in a key branch of the Al Khalifa family, the Khalid bin Ali branch, being imprisoned, banished or fleeing. The Dawasir, fearing retribution, left en masse for Saudi Arabia. The trials did not end security problems for the ruler. For example, in May 1923, a three day riot broke out in Manama between Persians and Najdis which the Municipal Police could not contain. There was also a fear of attacks from groups in Saudi Arabia who were aligned with those the trails punished.

Recognising that the existing local security force was inadequate, the ruler agreed to Britain's recommendation to form a 100-strong force gendarmerie – the Bahrain Levy Corps. Britain took responsibility for planning and organising the Levies. Recruiting locals was not seen as practical as there were insufficient men who were both sufficiently healthy and not aligned with a Bahraini tribal, ethnic or merchant group. Instead, Britain decided to recruit Omani-Baluchi in the belief that they would be 'reliable'. In Muscat, men were hired for the new force with recruits also obtained from Persian Makran and Baluchi Makran. A handful of former Indian Army instructors were also engaged and these would supervise and train the new force. The Bahrain Levy Corps would be under the command a British Indian Army officer, with its first Commanding Officer being Captain A.G. Campbell. When he arrived in August 1924, all the recruits had arrived. The commander of the Levies was also given responsibility for the state prison at what became known as the Manama Police Fort, plus administering but not commanding the Municipal Police. In July 1925, command of the Levies was handed over to its second and final commander, Captain T.H. Geake.

The headquarters and barracks and quarters (i.e the lines) of the Bahrain Levy Corps were located at the Manama Police Fort. The Levies also maintained three posts of six to eight men at Sitra, Budhaya and Karzakan in Muharraq. The force used the Indian rank structure of *subadars* (first lieutenants), *havalldars* (sergeants), *naiks* (corporals), lance *naiks* (lance corporals) and *sepoys* (privates). By mid-1926, the force had expanded to a Commanding Officer, one Indian *subadar*, four Indian *havalldars*, one Baluch *havalldar*, two *naiks*, eight lance *naiks* and 132 *sepoys*. The force was structured as a British Army company with a 14-man Company HQ and three



Bahrain State Police presenting arms with their SMLE Mark III, late 1920s. Bahrain's police initially first wore a uniform which included a cap badge, shoulder badges (titles), serge jackets, serge trousers, blue or khaki breeches, black Persian caps, hosetops, khaki putties, socks, jerseys and *durries*, red turban and brown sandals from 1920s and black sandals from 1930. Some of this uniform was carried over into the uniform seen in the photo. (Ministry of Interior)

platoons of 35 men each. It was equipped with Mark III Lee Enfield carbines, which were obtained from excess stock held by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company but kept at the Political Residency in Bushire.

A number of the Levies were detached to serve in the Municipal Police. By mid-1926, the police consisted of one Arab superintendent, five *subadars* and 83 *sepoys*.

The quality of the men recruited in Oman was generally poor, with a number being criminals and having been discharged for bad conduct from other military forces. Few spoke Arabic or Persian, but rather a combination of Baluchi, Urdu and English. Consequently, the inability to converse in local languages plus poor discipline resulted in them frequently causing trouble. On 3 August 1926, two Omani-Baluchi policemen attempted to murder the Municipal Police Superintendent. The attack was motivated by personal hatred. Both were rapidly arrested with the Superintendent escaping with



Men of the Bahrain Levy Corps, circa 1924. The uniform consisted of an Indian Army khaki drill jacket (frock), khaki *kullah* (i.e. conical hat) and *puggree* (i.e. turban), khaki putties, khaki drill shorts, khaki *durrie*, jersey, shirt, socks, hose tops and *puggree* fringe (i.e. a smallish piece of cloth with the unit colours on it). (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

slight gunshot wounds. On the following day, a *sepo*y entered the Levy's office in the Manama Police Fort and shot an Indian *subadar* and *havaladar*, and bayoneted the British Political Agent, Major Daly. The Indians died but the Political Agent survived. The motivation for the attack turned out to be revenge against the *subadar* due to his petty tyranny, and the *havaladar* as he was the *subadar's* friend. Levy guards on duty fled upon hearing the shooting and panic swept the town fearing the troops had mutinied and would loot. This did not occur, and the murderer was arrested and the Levies returned to their normal routine.

The Political Agency feared the entire force was unreliable and requested British military assistance. On 9 August the sloop HMS *Cyclamen* arrived and despatched four bluejackets to stand guard at the Political Agency, then being guarded by both Levy and police personnel. On 13 August HMS *Triad* arrived and in the early morning of 14 August, a combined party of bluejackets from both warships went to the Manama Police Fort and took possession of all arms and ammunition. After evaluating the options, British authorities decided to disband the Bahrain Levy Corps. Around 129 Levies in the force plus 63 Levies in the police were discharged and shipped back to either Muscat or Gwadar in August. The murderer was executed by firing squad in Bahrain in September.

At the time of the murders, the Levy's Commanding Officer was on leave with command temporarily passing to the newly arrived British financial advisor, Charles Belgrave. He had experience with working with Arab forces having served for two years in the Egyptian Army Camel Corps during the First World War. Belgrave was one of a handful of Britons who had been employed by the ruler to head up his newly formed government departments arising from the reforms starting in 1919. Their appointment was encouraged by the Political Agent as a way to initiate modern government while avoiding obvious and direct intervention by Britain in the internal affairs of Bahrain. Belgrave would become a pivotal figure associated with Bahrain's development and its security forces until 1956. Within a few years of his engagement by the ruler, he would become the ruler's Advisor and began supervising the entire government of Bahrain. He did this through his office known as the Advisorate. The Advisorate supervised all departments and directly controlled all financial matters. Individual departments had some independence to run their day-to-day affairs but all significant decisions were taken by the Advisor, who consulted the ruler as necessary. Over the decades the ruler became more disengaged with the running of the country and relied more on Belgrave. His considerable influence was resented by Bahrainis and his removal became one of the demands in the 1956 outbreak of anti-British sentiment and nationalistic feelings.

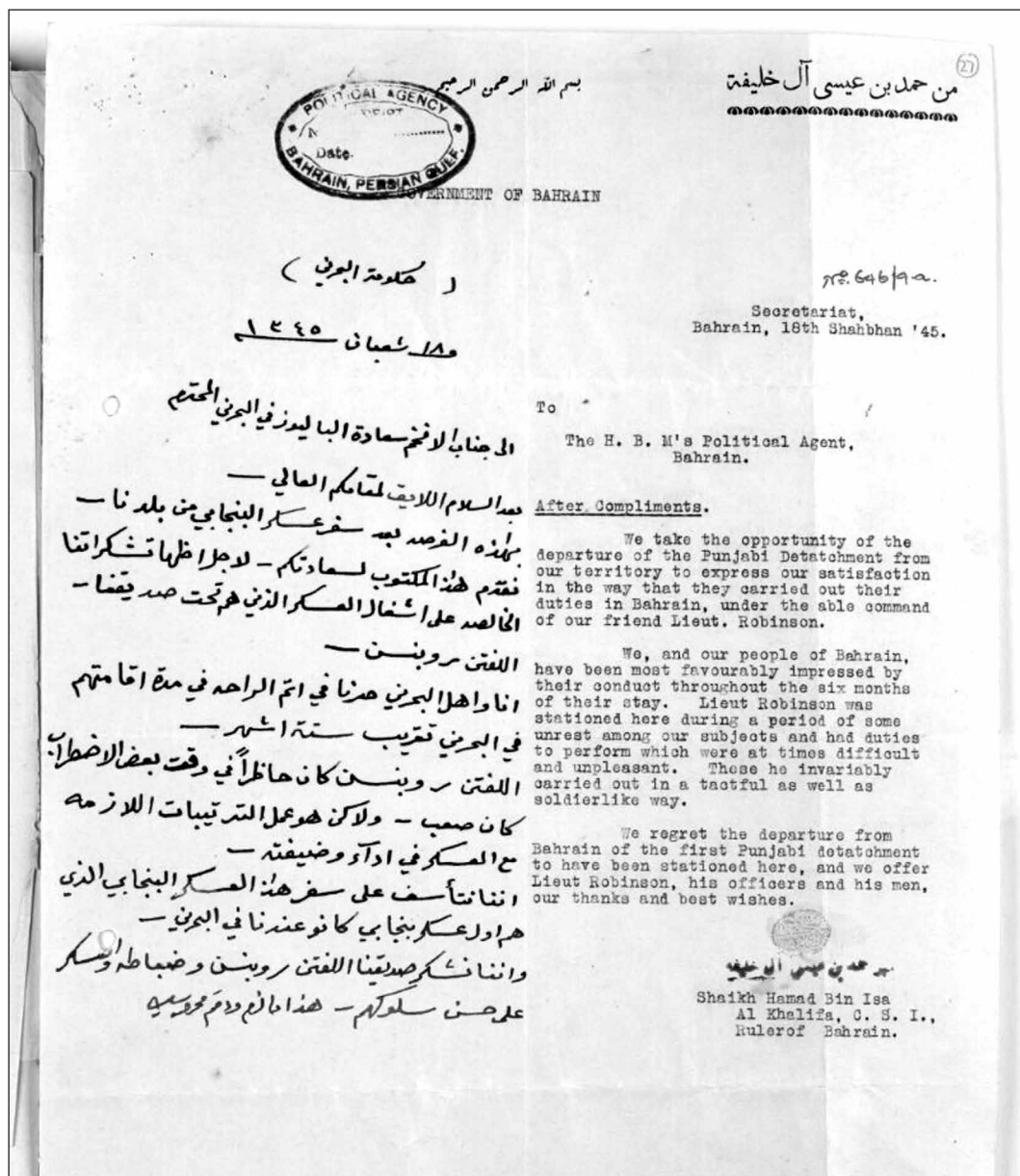
The experience of the Bahrain Levy Corps and the Municipal Police led the ruler and Britain to decide to build a different sort of security force – an armed police force. Called the Bahrain State Police, the force would be again led by a British Army officer but this time it would be made up of former Indian military and police personnel recruited from Karachi. To provide security in Bahrain until the State Police became effective, the Government of India sent two platoons of the 3rd Company, 16th Punjab Regiment, the 'Punjabi Mohammedans,' under Lieutenant R.C. Robinson. These stayed in Bahrain from September 1926 to February 1927.

Between December 1926 and January 1927, some 100 men arrived from India on four-year contracts. Also recruited as the force's Commandant was Captain L.S. Parke whose immediate past position had been second-in-command of the 1st Yemen Infantry in Aden in 1919. Local recruitment was also undertaken and one

Bahraini officer and 41 Bahraini policemen were hired. From its beginnings, the force had a strong Indian influence which could be seen in its uniform, rank titles and its popular name – the 'Punjabi Police.' The force's structure in 1927 consisted of the Commandant, Superintendent, *havalgars*, *naiks*, lance *naiks* and men. In the 1930s, conventional British police ranks were increasingly used. Captain Parke remained the Commandant until he left in 1932, whereupon Belgrave assumed this role in addition to being the ruler's Advisor. The role of Superintendent was initially undertaken by an Indian officer and then by the former Superintendent of the Municipal Police, Haji Salman bin Jasim. Haji Salman was educated and well respected, resulting in him personally investigating most serious criminal matters. The most important of the cases in the late 1920s was the 1929 attempted assassination of the ruler by four gunmen as he was driving just outside of Manama. After months of investigation, the attackers were arrested along with the disaffected member of the ruling family who funded the men.

The roles of the State Police were to: (1) protect Bahrain against tribal attacks from the mainland, (2) suppress internal disturbances, (3) prevent and investigate crime, (4) provide Guards of Honour on ceremonial occasions, and (5) guard the ruler, the British Political Agency and the ruler's Advisor. The police from its origins were more a military force than a police service. Its military nature was reflected in the police adoption of military ranks, emphasis on military skills including drill and shooting, the carriage of military weapons (Mark III .303" for men and .455" Webley revolver for officers) and living centrally in lines.

Supporting the police were *natur*s. Most *natur*s were employed in the urban areas of Bahrain and Muharraq islands, although some were located in villages or at important locations. For example, of the 125 *natur*s employed in the early 1930s, 102 were located in the urban areas of Manama and Muharraq, eight in villages (four at Budaya, two at Khamis and four at Asker) and 13 at key locations (four at Sitra oil terminal, six at Muharraq aerodrome and three at Umm Shajar Al Kabir). Until into the 1940s, the *natur*s were responsible for night-time security in urban areas as the police only patrolled during the day. The *natur*s operated out of separate



A 1926 letter of appreciation from the ruler of Bahrain, Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, to the detachment from the 3rd Company of the 16th Punjab Regiment, British Indian forces. The detachment maintained order in Bahrain over the period from the disbandment of the Bahrain Levy Corps to the establishment of the Bahrain State Police. The date on the letter is the Islamic not the Gregorian calendar. (Qatar Digital Library)

locations from the police, although over time their offices became co-located. In addition to patrolling, *natur*s would undertake the initial investigation of crimes and apprehend suspects during the night. Any night-time complaints from the public, incidents or detained people were handed over to the police each morning. Up until 1940, *natur*s were administratively under the control of the Superintendent of Police, except in Manama and Muharraq urban areas where they were under the direct supervision of emirs, then invariably a senior member of the Al Khalifa family living in the area. The non-urban *natur*s became armed with Short Magazine Lee Enfield Mark I and carried 10 rounds of ammunition. The *natur*s were considered effective in preventing thefts and as they lived in the community, they were an important source of local intelligence. While they were not as physically fit as the police nor trained in military matters, they became a valued support element in case of emergencies.

The headquarters of the State Police remained the Manama Police Fort, now a crumbling walled fort with a few deteriorating mud and

stone buildings. The fort also served as the police's administrative and supply centre, the state's jail and the force's lines. In 1930, the force became responsible for issuing passports and visas, a function established by the government of Bahrain in 1929 and initially placed within the Department of Customs.

Local policing functions were not carried out at the police fort but at police stations and police posts. The first proper police station in Bahrain was established in the early 1930s in central Manama – the Bab Al Bahrain Police Station. It was initially located in a shop in the market. The second one was in Muharraq, established in 1941, although there were police posts in both Muharraq and Hedd since the early 1930s. Each police station was headed by a *havaladar*. Police posts were smaller than a station, and generally consisted of a small office, men's quarters and a lock-up, all enclosed within a wall. Only police stations handled criminal matters. Reports from *natur*s or police posts were sent to the police stations, and for important cases at the police posts, an investigating officer was sent from Manama. For police posts outside of Manama, personnel were posted there for a month before returning to the Manama Police Fort. Generally, one-half of the post personnel worked one day and the other the next. In Manama, personnel manning police stations would travel there daily from the fort. The justification for locating police and *natur* posts varied. For example, the post at Budaiya was established to deter raiders from the mainland, the post at Hawar was to prevent the archipelago being annexed by Qatar, and the post near Jaww was to stop both illegal immigrants and smuggling as the latter undermined customs duties which provided around 90 percent of the state's income before oil.

The police were divided into 26 sections, with each section consisting of around 10 men plus one or two NCOs. Deployments to police stations and posts were in multiples of sections. For example in 1940, the Bab Al Bahrain Police Station was manned by two sections headed by *havalgars* (in 1941 the station's head became a sub-inspector), and the Hedd Police Post was manned by one section headed by a *naik*. As only seven sections were ever posted to police stations and posts, the bulk of the police was located at the fort. From there, they were tasked for special duties such as work in courts, hospital orderlies and jail guards.

THE 1930s, AND THE BAHRAINISATION OF THE STATE POLICE AND ITS EXPANSION

The Great Depression, which starting in 1929, initiated an economic and trade decline in Bahrain. This accelerated in the early 1930s due to the collapse in one of Bahrain's key sectors – pearling – caused by Japan producing cultured pearls at a cost far lower than diving. In Bahrain, the first few years of the 1930s saw growing bankruptcy of pearling merchants, boat owners and traders and as well as increased unemployment. The collapse in trade and pearls also reduced the ruler's key sources of income – custom duties and pearling taxes. Government expenditure needed to be reduced, including for the State Police. One source of savings was to replace the Indians in the police with cheaper labour. Initially Belgrave thought Sudanese would be suitable but he could not obtain them in sufficient numbers. The next choice was Bahrainis and although the ruler was sceptical that sufficient suitable locals would volunteer, when he called upon his retainers to nominate their sons and young brothers for the force, the police were overwhelmed with recruits. In 1932, the 60 Indians who remained in the 120-strong State Police were replaced almost entirely by locally enlisted individuals – either Bahrainis including Baharna, Ajam and Sunni Bahraini, or foreign residents in Bahrain including Persians, Kurds, Yemenis, Iraqis,

mainland Arabs, Swahilis, Somalis, Sudanese and manumitted slaves. A small number of Indians stayed on as instructors. Another cost saving was to end the employment of Commandant Parke, with Belgrave assuming the Commandant responsibilities in addition to his existing ones.

The downturn in the pearling industry also coincided with increasing anger of the Baharnas over the lack of improvements in their life following the 1920s reforms. For this they blamed not only the ruler but Belgrave and other Britons who they considered were impeding needed reforms. One specific change the Baharnas wanted was an end to unreasonable financial conditions imposed on divers and pullers. In 1924, a law had been introduced which attempted to do this by abolishing hereditary debts and forbidding ship captains to sell pearls privately and thus preventing them from manipulating the price of their pearls. The law also set a maximum amount of money which could be advanced to the pearling workers. That latter provision was opposed by many workers who wanted and needed a larger advance in order for their family to survive the year. Dissatisfaction with the 1924 law saw regular protests and culminated in the 1932 large-scale disturbance in Muharraq. The police arrested several protesters and detained them in the Bab Al Bahrain Police Station. A crowd of some 1,500 of their colleagues crossed from Muharraq to Manana looting shops on the way, and then marching to the police station. They overwhelmed the station's guard, stormed the building and released the detainees. The police, Belgrave and others tried to peacefully end the occupation of the police station and disperse the crowd. They were unsuccessful, leading the police to open fire. Several divers were killed and a



A Bahrain State Police guard at the British Political Agency in the 1930s. Police recruits did a six-month training course which in the 1930s was a modified version of the Indian Army recruit course. It included drill, musketry, bayonet fighting and *lathi* technique. The guard is wearing a single leather bandolier which was issued from 1930. Each of its pockets held five rounds. As the men's shirts and shorts were made by the lines' tailors with no check on the amount of khaki drill and twill used, there was considerable variations in the uniforms in the 1930s. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)



A Bahrain State Police officer of the 1930s wearing an adapted British Indian Army uniform, Sam Browne plus an Arab headdress with black *agal*. This officer is not wearing a hat badge. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

number wounded. Subsequently the ring leaders were arrested, with a number being publicly flogged.

The discovering of oil in 1932 would reverse the state's economic decline by the mid-1930s. Oil was discovered near Jebal al Dukhan by the Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPCO), and in 1934



A Bahrain State Police officer of the mounted section, 1945. He is wearing a khaki tunic, a turban with the headdress badge and leather bandolier. The Indian influence is still apparent despite the vast majority of Indians having left the force in 1932. The turban consisted of a six-arm's length of cloth and was worn over a hat called a *bikli*. The headdress badge is the 1939 issue which was worn in the centre front of the turban. The badge had crossed daggers with the word Bahrain in Arabic scrip on a scroll in Arabic beneath the daggers. The badge was issued in brass, blackened metal or bronze, and was held in place by a pin or lugs. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

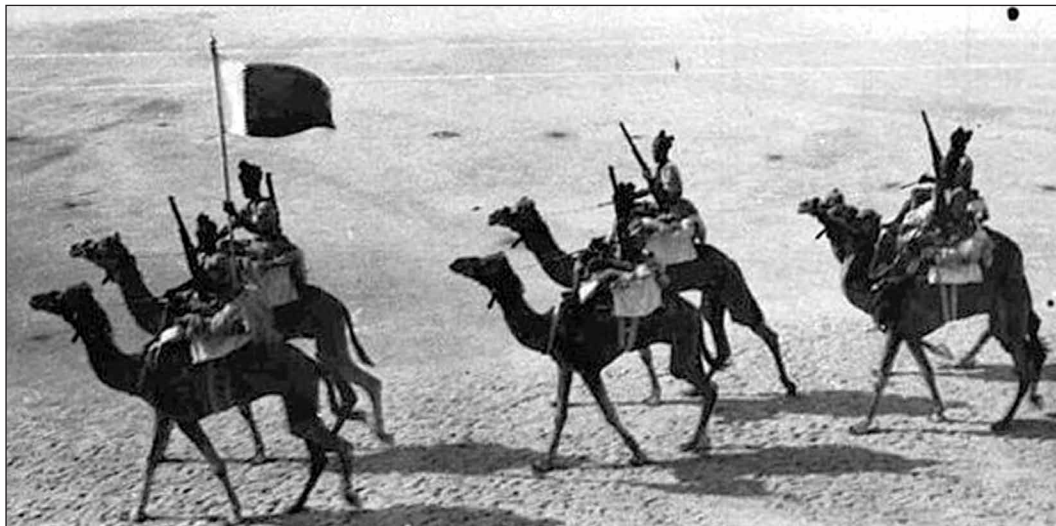
BAPCO's first oil tanker shipment left Bahrain via a storage and loading facility on Sitra Island. In 1936 BAPCO opened a refinery near Sitra. To provide housing for BAPCO's skilled employees, the township of Awali was established. The oil development required large numbers of engineers and technicians plus unskilled workers. Consequently, Bahrain experienced an influx of expatriates, notably

from Western countries, Persia and northern Arab states. As few Bahrainis had the required skills, more Bahrainis were employed in low skilled work.

The revenue from oil concessions and exports was the property of the ruler, who allocated a portion of his increased income to government agencies including the State Police. From the mid-1930s, the police expanded in numbers, introduced new departments and increased its network of stations and posts. The growth in the oil industry also meant that the State Police had additional tasks, such as the protection of BAPCO's oil wells, its refinery and infrastructure on Sitra Island. The possibility of employment in the oil sector and expanding economy also saw an increase in illegal migration, which in



Celebration for a national event in the late 1930s. The mounted police of the Bahrain State Police wore riding boots, jodhpurs, a tunic and a red turban. The pennant is red over white, which were the colours of the then Bahrain flag. By 1940, the horse section numbered 22 members – one *naik*, one lance *naik* and 20 *sowars* (lancers). (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)



The Bahrain State Police's camel section on parade, late 1930s. The Bahrain state flag being carried is that used from 1932 to independence. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)



The police fort on Hawar Island being constructed in 1937 in order to reinforce Bahrain's claims for the Hawar archipelago. Just before the Second World War, the Bahrain's police detachment at the fort peaked at nearly 20. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

turn meant that the State Police needed to increase its resources in countering this problem.

The 1930s saw for the first time specially designed police stations and posts being built – such as in 1934–35 at Hedd and Budaiya. In 1935, the State Police established a camel-mounted section. It was initially headed by a Sudanese NCO, formerly of the Egyptian Frontier Districts Administration Camel Corps, and most of its members were manumitted slaves. The camel section patrolled the coastline and inland, looking for criminal activity such as arms and goods smuggling and people arriving without passports, as well as deterring attacks, whether it be from mainland Arabs or on the infrastructure of BAPCO. Patrols involved four men and lasted for four days with the route being Manama Police Fort, Budaiya, Zallaq, Al Areen, Al Mamtalah, Al Dur, Jaww, Askar, Sitra and Manama Police Fort. In 1937, a mounted horse section was also established. Its duties including patrolling near Manama, undertaking ceremonial activities, and being an armed escort. It was trained to stand rifle fire, although it was not trained for riot control. The horse section also supported equestrian activities of the officers, including polo. The horses and camels were mostly provided from the ruler's stables.

The oil industry and expanding economy saw a jump in motor vehicles, and correspondingly in deaths and injuries. This prompted the government of Bahrain in 1934 to establish laws to regulate motor vehicles, carts and bicycles, and introduce road rules. Now vehicles needed to keep to the left of the road, every car required lights at night, vehicles must carry number plates, and drivers needed to pass a driving test and obtain a licence. The State Police was responsible for the traffic laws, as well as investigating crashes and supervising traffic at busy intersections. The police established a dedicated traffic section in the mid-1930s. By 1937, Bahrain had 475 registered cars and 753 licensed drivers in Bahrain. In that year there were two fatal crashes and 20 accidents.

From 1935 to 1937, small numbers of police personnel were sent to India for training. Many went to the 10th Baluch Regiment at Karachi for a course of nine month's military training. One of these was Sheikh Khalifa bin Mohammed bin Isa Al Khalifa who was appointed as Superintendent of the State Police in 1939. Indian Army instructors were also brought to Bahrain. An

example was a group who came to teach riot control methods, and provided instruction on bayonet fighting, musketry and the use of *lathi* (a 1m long bamboo cane) to disperse crowds.

In 1937 the long-standing territorial dispute between Bahrain and Qatar over the ownership of land escalated with Bahrain imposing a blockade on Qatar. This prevented Qataris from travelling to Bahrain. Bahrain also in that year built a police fort on Hawar Island to reinforce its claim to the Hawar archipelago. The fort was initially manned by *natur*s, but as tension escalated manned by a police detachment of two sections. The dispute with Qatar plus ongoing concerns over potential raids from the Saudi mainland saw the State Police in 1937 increase its patrolling of Bahrain's coast and expanding its stations and posts in the southern villages. In 1937, the police acquired a motor launch to both patrol the coast and travel between Hawar and Bahrain islands.

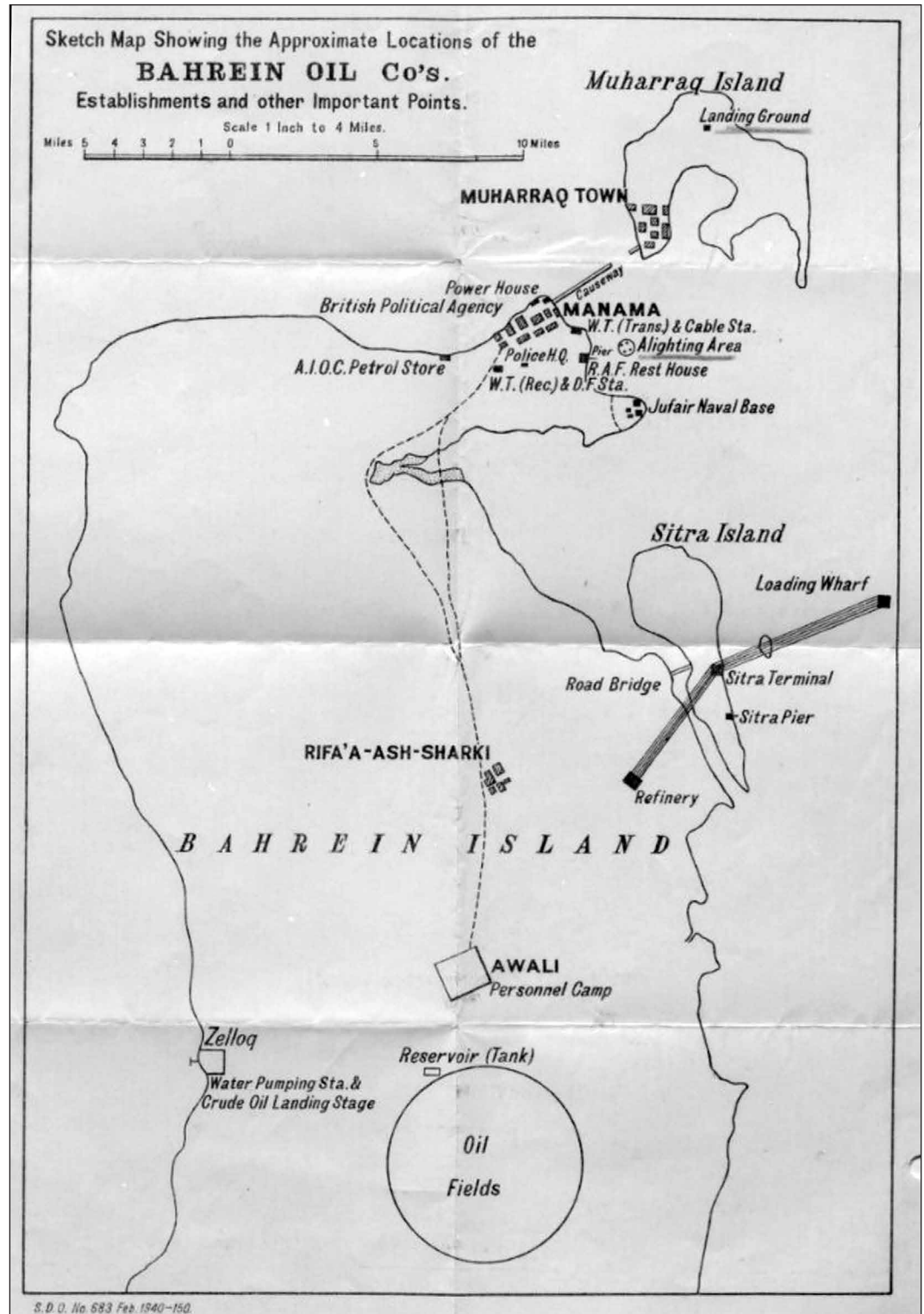
The oil-led economic expansion and influx of expatriates increased political awareness among Bahrainis and activism by expatriates. This drove in the second-half of the 1930s increasing demands for both government reforms, and better pay and conditions. Strikes started to occur, with one eventful one being held in November 1938 by BAPCO workers. The protest was supported by a sympathetic

public and the march of workers in Manama resulted in shops and buildings closing for fear of looting and arson. The police broke up the protest, including for the first time using the police horse-mounted troop. Given its lack of riot control training, the result was chaos. The presence of expatriates plus foreign and local media exposed Bahrainis to nationalist, pan-Arab, anti-British and other political ideas. Issues around which hostility to the political and economy system in Bahrain coalesced included eliminating the power of Belgrave and other Britons, the disengagement of the ruler in the affairs of the state, foreigners rather than locals filling governmental posts, corruption in government administration and the legal system, and the lack of a penal code which meant that the outcome of criminal cases could be arbitrary and inconsistent.

Drawing on the reform movements then underway in Kuwait and Dubai, groups of Bahraini pushed for a series of wide-range government reforms. These included establishing a legislative assembly, dismissal of certain judges and the head of education, plus reforms to the police force and courts. While some of the demands were met, the ruler also dealt with the protesters by ordering the arrest of several of the reform agitators. In response, the recently established Bahrain Youth Movement which was made up of junior clerks and students called for BAPCO workers to go on strike. They did which paralysed BAPCO's operation. After Friday prayers on 6 November, students, oil workers and supportive public members marched towards the markets in Manama. The police broke up the demonstration, causing some casualties. The police also arrested the leadership of both the Youth Movement and oil workers. With these arrests, the strike fell apart. This ended the challenge to the government, and the call for reforms would remain in stasis during the Second World War before re-emerging in the early 1950s.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR YEARS, THE SPECIAL DEFENCE POLICE AND THE BAHRAIN LOCAL VOLUNTEER DEFENCE FORCE

In the second half of 1938 as the political and security environment in Europe deteriorated, the Political Agent in Bahrain, Hugh Weightman, was ordered by the Political Resident to develop local defence schemes for both Bahrain and Kuwait. For Bahrain, the priorities were protecting BAPCO's facilities, the Muharraq aerodrome and the wireless station near HMS *Jufair*. Among his recommendations was to expand the Bahrain State Police. At the



A 1940 map of Bahrain showing key infrastructure that needed to be protected. Oil targets were considered to be the well heads in the oil field, the refinery, and the Sitra terminal. The map also shows key military locations, notably the Muharraq aerodrome, HMS *Jufair* and the wireless station. (Qatar Digital Library)

start of the war, its strength was four *havalendars*, seven *naiks*, 17 lance *naiks*, 240 policemen, 15 in the camel section, 16 in the horse section, 17 bandsmen, 5 Indian instructors and 22 camp followers.

The British declaration of war on 3 September 1939 led immediately to the Police Commandant establishing special guards at various places in and around Manama, plus implementing a program to protect BAPCO's facilities. The latter saw the State Police instigate car, horse and camel patrols of the oil field, as well as posting static guards at facility gates and the power station. The camel section, which was now based between Jaww and Door, patrolled the coast from the refinery in the north to Ras Al Barr in the south. The horse section was divided into two with one half remaining in the Manama Police Force and the other at Budaiya. Daily patrols were made to Zellq, Riffa, Manama, Sakhir and other parts of Bahrain Island. To maximise the number of available police for security purposes, all leave was cancelled and police on Hawar Island were withdrawn and replaced with *natur*s.

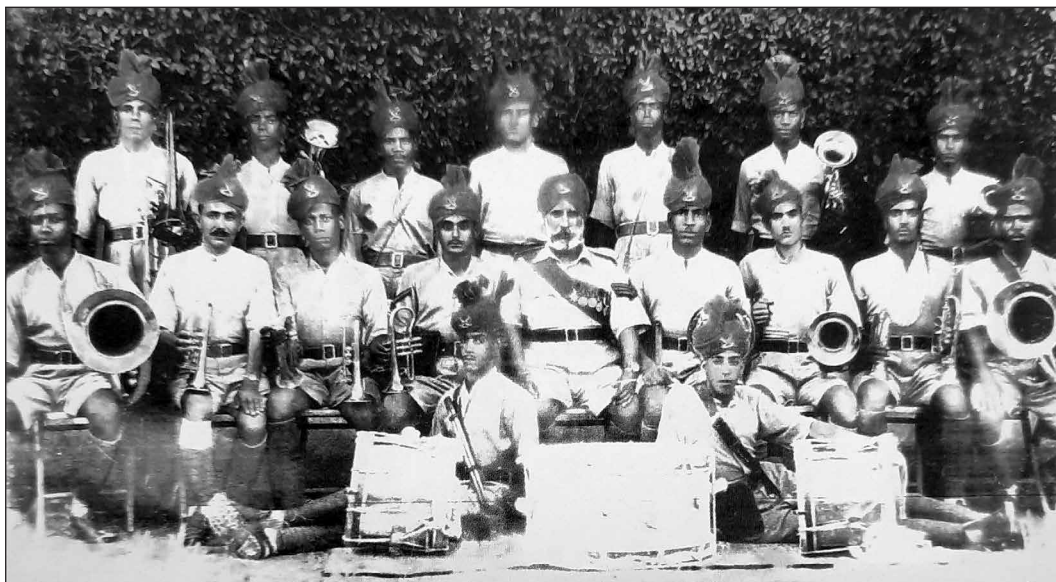
As of December 1939, some 41 policemen and 40 *natur*s of the State Police were allocated to guarding the refinery around the clock. They were armed with rifles, bayonets and one Vickers-Berthier light machine gun provided by the British Indian Army. To call for assistance, the police were equipped with whistles and Very pistols and with instructions that they must shoot the flare in a direction away from the refinery. In 1939, the police obtained two BSA and five Norton motorcycles which allowed it to establish its first motorcycle section for rapid response.

Recognising that the number of police and *natur*s was inadequate for the wartime tasks, the State Police sought more recruits. This turned out to be difficult due to the old problem that there were few Bahraini subjects who met both the height requirement of 5'6" and health standards including good eyesight. Applicants were also deterred due to the rumour that men might be sent abroad for military service, and also because of the tedium of guard duty.

In December 1939 the Political Agent noted that the police force guarding BAPCO facilities suffered from poor discipline and that the 'NCO police are pitiful and cannot function when removed from the direct supervision of the Commandant of the Bahrain Police Force'. In addition, guarding duties were so unpopular that police were



The Bahrain State Police's mounted camel section at BAPCO's refinery, 1938. The section was disbanded around 1952, with its remaining 11 camels sold. (BAPCO)

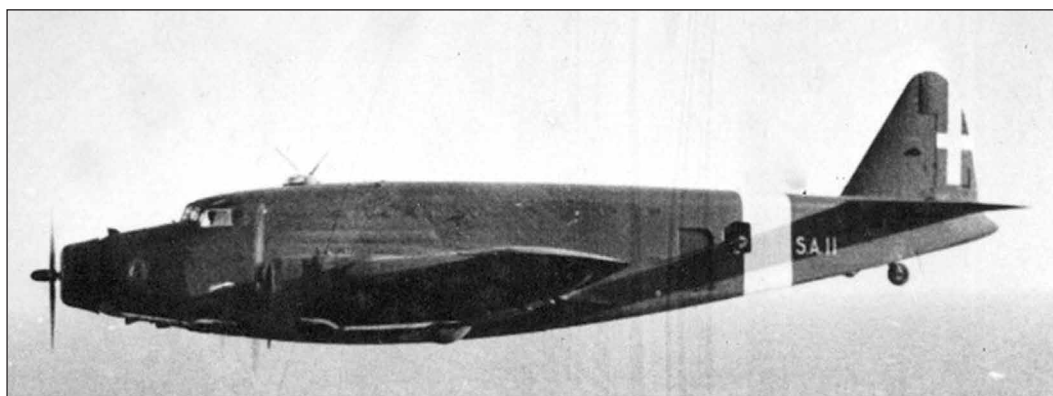


Bahrain State Police Band, 1940s. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

asking to be discharged. The Commandant of State Police sought to ameliorate these problems in the short-term through increasing the number of *natur*s which allowed police personnel to be reduced plus rationalising guarding arrangements, such as ending the barge-based guard post which sat three miles offshore at the terminal point for oil loading. The longer-term solution adopted was to form the Special Defence Police, a division of the State Police tasked purely with guarding BAPCO's facilities. Given the lack of suitable Bahraini recruits, it was proposed that Baluchis would be recruited from India. This was vetoed by the ruler who likely was concerned that such a large number of non-Arabic speaking and armed foreigners posed a risk to internal stability. The ruler wanted only his subjects serving in the Special Defence Police, and specified that they needed to meet the same physical standards as the police. This made recruitment difficult, as seen in the fact that in the first 150 applicants, only eight proved suitable. However by mid-1940, the Special Defence Police had reached the target of 50 special policemen with probably the same number of *natur*s. A separate camp for them was built at Riffa



The Italian Air Force's SM.82 bomber that took part in the raid on Bahrain in 1942. (Italian Embassy, Canberra)



The Italian SM.82 bomber could be modified to a transport plane and served in the German Air Force in Russia. (Italian Embassy, Canberra)

located between the refinery and Awali. Unable to obtain rifles from British sources, the Special Defence Police borrowed them from the ruler, probably from the ruler's armoury. Another shortage was uniforms, and consequently the special policemen had to wear partial and patched police uniforms until new uniforms arrived from British sources in 1943.

Training of the Special Defence Police was initially undertaken by the State Police itself. Recognising that the force needed to be trained along military lines, the Political Agent requested a team from the RAF's Iraq Levies. In May 1940, the RAF agreed to supply one officer and four NCOs, all of whom were Iraqi nationals. These Iraqis would provide not only training but also the force's leadership. In September 1940, the officer arrived in Bahrain with the four NCOs joining him shortly after. This was a delay of some five months which was due to the Iraq government not approving their exit permits. This apparently was retribution for the perceived insult to Iraq by Bahrain asking for personnel from the British-controlled Levies rather than from the Iraqi police. The Iraq government,

more broadly, also disliked the Levies as it undermined national sovereignty and given it contained numbers of Assyrians who supported an Assyrian state, the Levies posed a secessionist threat.

Recognising that the original 50-man establishment strength of the Special Defence Police was inadequate, the ruler agreed in October 1940 to increase it to around 160. To achieve this target, the height requirement was removed and

the eyesight standards lowered. By January 1941 the Special Defence Police's strength had grown to 150 special policemen plus around 180 *natur*s, mostly recruited from retired police and former *natur*s. This remained the strength of the force to 1945 when the Special Defence Police was disbanded and its numbers absorbed into the State Police.

Another wartime measure adopted by Bahrain was to form the Bahrain Local Volunteer Defence Force. The force's concept was developed in 1938 and relied on the Europeans in Bahrain volunteering. In 1939, some 240 Britons worked for BAPCO which was the largest employer by far of British personnel in Bahrain. However, the expected enthusiasm for the force never materialised. In mid-October 1940, the number of volunteers was just 59. Reflecting on this response, the Political Resident noted that the British BAPCO men 'were an argumentative crowd and have thought up an amazing number of reasons for not joining'. To help build the force, in late 1940 the Political Resident organised a meeting with 'a dozen of the better men in order to get them to encourage their

associates and fellow shift-workers to join.' This and other measures increased their number and by the end of the year, the force had 100 recruits. Around 90 percent were BAPCO employees.

In late 1940, a British sergeant had arrived which meant training could begin. However, arms were slow to arrive and had to be loaned locally. Recognising both the limited number of volunteers and the presence of only one instructor, by late 1940 the Volunteer Defence Force's strength had been capped at 120. British officials had been considering permitting US or Indian nationals to join, however, in late 1940 it was decided to not allow this to occur. The reason was that allowing Americans to join posed difficulties due to attestation and enlisting nationals not at war with the Axis powers, and for Indians because British authorities considered that of those Indians on Bahrain 'very few belonged to martial races.'

In January 1941, the Volunteer Defence Force boasted only 87 members, with even smaller numbers turning out for regular parades due to a lack of enthusiasm for training. The decisions by BAPCO that it would not provide bonuses to their volunteer personnel while on military duty and would not be liable for their injury or death unless it occurred while actually protecting the company's property also undermined interest in volunteering. Recognising that the small, badly trained and ill-equipped force had limited utility, it was effectively disbanded around September 1941 when all of its arms and equipment were despatched to British forces in Basra. The force never wore uniforms for while they had been ordered, the uniforms only arrived after the force had been disbanded.

Bahrain in the Second World War suffered only one physical attack by an Axis power, although it was threatened at various times by all three major Axis powers – Italy, Japan and Germany. When Italy entered the war in June 1940, the British were concerned that it would attack Allied interests in the Arabian Gulf including Bahrain. The threat was anticipated to come from Italy's Red Sea Flotilla of submarines and surface combatants based in Italian Eritrea. However, the first, and as it turned out only, Italian attack on Bahrain came from Italy's air force. Four SM.82 bombers flew from the Mediterranean with three dropping bombs on BAPCO's assets on 20 October 1940. The bombers then flew on to Eritrea. The containment and destruction of the Red Sea Flotilla, and the overrunning of Italian Eritrea the following year, ended the Italian threat. However, it was replaced in early 1941 by the concern that German forces could invade northern Iraq and Iran, providing it with bases from which to launch air attacks on the Gulf or to push onto the Gulf. The threat from Germany lasted until early 1943.

The four SM.82 bombers carried a payload of 3,310lb of incendiary and high-explosive bombs. The bombers left Rhodes on a two-and-a-half thousand mile flight to Massawa. Flying in a diamond formation at about 9,000 feet up, their speed was about 175 miles an hour toward Lebanon and then as they went over the mountains of Lebanon they encountered heavy mist as they descended. Flight leader, Major Muti, at that time lost sight of the last aircraft in the flight. Wireless communication was maintained until passing Damascus and heading to the Arabian Gulf. To their east lay Iraq where the RAF had a number of airfields and maintained a close watch on the kingdom's borders and controlled the skies. The bombers continued on with a tail wind and bright moonlight showing the desert below. On sighting the coast of Kuwait, the flight descended to 3,000 feet and approached the northern point of Bahrain. This had taken about nine hours. Locating the Manama oil refineries was easy as they were well lit up. The British-run airfield's personnel turned on the runway lights thinking British aircraft were coming in. Virtually defenceless and with the oil refinery well lit up

and under a 'Bombers Moon' the three bombers attacked dropping nearly 200 bombs. Without being challenged the aircraft turned and headed off towards the Red Sea across Arabia. The fourth bomber which was out of touch with the main formation was about 30 miles west and dropped its payload on Dhahran oil refinery in Saudi Arabia. The pilot believed he was over Bahrain. Shortly after the raid the four bombers made contact again and headed off to Eritrea. The bomber flight succeeded in crossing the Red Sea on the way to Massawa but Major Muti learned by wireless that the RAF had bombed Massawa airport, but about 35 miles away lay Zul'a airfield. They turned south and landed successfully completing about 3,000 miles in 15 hours and 30 minutes. Little fuel was left in their tanks. The following day Italy's news service proudly announced the Bahrain oil refineries had been destroyed, but in reality it suffered no damage.

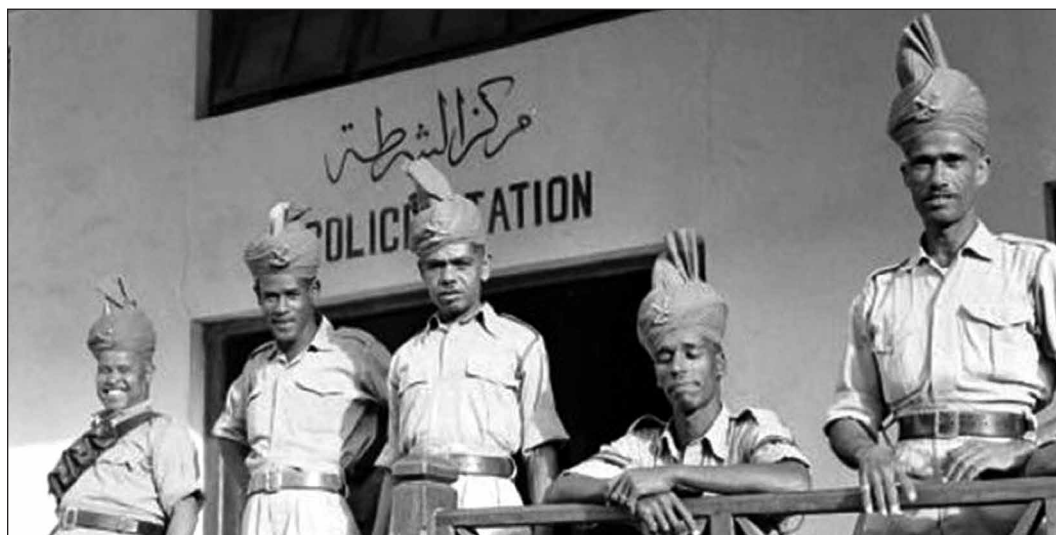
Another threat to Bahrain, which peaked in mid-1942, was Japan's westward thrust across the Indian Ocean which could see Japanese air and submarine raids on ports and oil infrastructure in the Gulf. Defending against these threats were principally British and Indian forces. Over 1942, British Indian troops manned anti-aircraft and coastal defences in Bahrain, and the RAF based detachments of both air-sea rescue and anti-submarine tasks in Bahrain. The number of British and British Indian military personnel in Bahrain reached 1,000 by December 1942. By the end of 1942 the threat of Axis air and sea attacks had diminished allowing British and British Indian forces to be withdrawn. In late 1943, the number of British military personnel at Bahrain would increase again as Muharraq became an important air staging post on the Allies' materiel air route connecting the US and Britain with India and beyond.

The war years saw a reorganisation of the higher administrative structure of the police. Up to 1942, the operational head of the police was the Superintendent, who reported to the Commandant. He in turn reported to the ruler. In 1942, the position of Chief of Police and Public Security was established which sat between the ruler and the Commandant. This new position was held by Sheikh Khalifa bin Mohammed bin Isa Al Khalifa from 1942 to 1961.

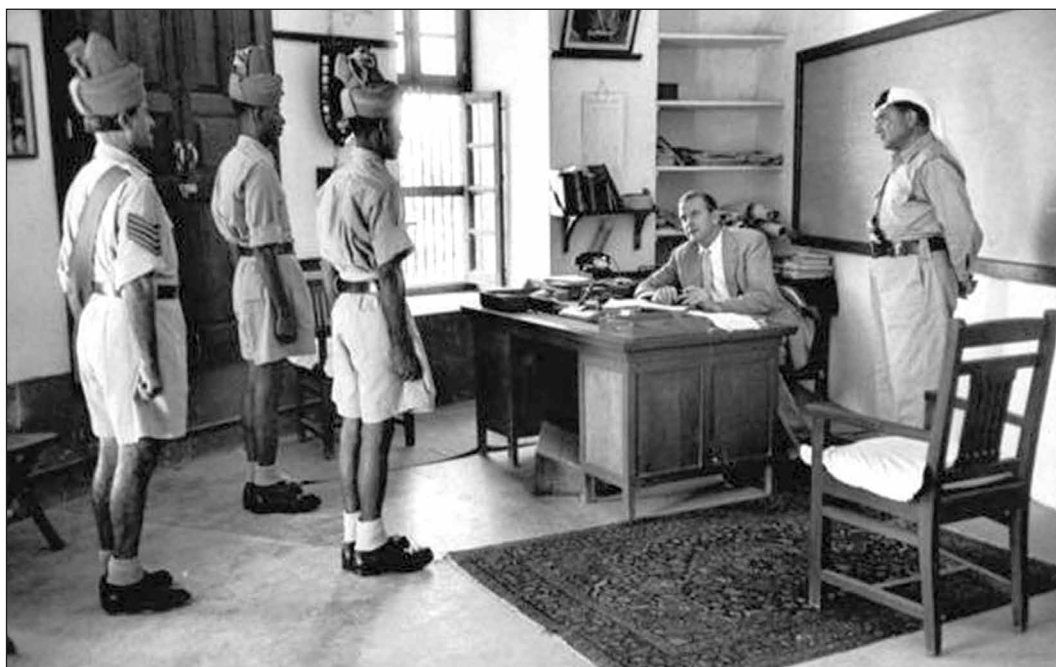
1945 TO THE LATE 1950s, INCREASING POLITICAL UNREST AND THE RESULTING EXPANSION OF THE STATE POLICE

The war years saw an increase in the Bahrain population's political awareness and engagement driven principally by increasing media availability and the popularity of clubs and societies. The first local newspaper *Al Bahrain* was established in 1939, and the Bahrain Broadcasting Station started transmitting in 1940. While Britain used them both to help build support for the Allies and to counter Berlin's Arab Service Axis propaganda, the media also made Bahrainis more aware of current affairs and in particular, the situation of Arabs across the region under imperial powers. Clubs and societies, of which there were many types from literary to cultural and from sports to music, were not established for political reasons, but due to the absence of political parties in Bahrain, they became important forums in which members discussed political issues and helped develop political opinions.

Interest in political developments continued to grow after the war and these started to have a significant impact on the domestic political and security environment. An early example was a demonstration in support of Arabs and the United Nations' Partition Plan for Palestine which escalated into riots on 4 and 5 December 1947. Houses and shops of Jews were ransacked before the police contained the situation.



Five policemen standing on the front porch of the Bab Al Bahrain Police Station, 1950s. Bab Al Bahrain is the old centre of Manama, and was the location of the first police station established in the state. The leftmost policeman is the station's sentry who stood out the front. He is armed with a Mark III .303 and wears a bandolier over his left shoulder. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)



The Bahrain State Police Commandant, Charles Belgrave, in his office at the Manana Police Fort, 1956, instructing two policemen and a *havaladar*. The *havaladar* is wearing a scarlet sash showing he is the duty NCO and red turbans are also worn. Standing on Belgrave's left side is one of the newly recruited officers from Iraq. He wears a white *shemagh*. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

Political awareness drove demands for reform in Bahrain in the early 1950s which were further buoyed by transformative events including Egypt's revolution in 1952, Mossadeq's reforms of 1951 to 1953, and the growth of pan-Arabism in the Levant. Domestically, political discourse was focused on four issues – the unwelcome continual dominance of Belgrave over the government of Bahrain, the ongoing influence of Britain in Bahrain, the failure of the new ruler (Sheikh Salam who came to power in 1942) to change either the style or nature of government, and slow rate of improvement in standard of living, education, etc compared to the eastern provinces of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

However, the first serious internal security incident of the 1950s was not linked to demands for reforms. In September 1953, a Shia religious parade in Manama was stoned by a group of Sunnis who then attacked a Shia neighbourhood. Sectarian confrontations occurred in subsequent months, escalating into one at Sitra in June

1954 in which a Sunni was killed. Shia ringleaders were given what was considered by the Shia community as excessively harsh punishment. On 2 July 1954, a large group of Shia protesting the sentence marched on Manama Police Fort. Fearing that the demonstrators would force their way in and free the prisoners, the police pre-emptively opened fire killing four Shia. An investigation found the police acted inappropriately, but those responsible were only reprimanded.

The activists who wanted political and social reforms in Bahrain recognised that these sectarian tensions could destabilise Bahrain and impede the state's modernisation. Consequently, its leaders held discussions and public meetings to build bridges between the Shia and Sunni communities, along with other groups such as oil workers. During 1954, a list of widely supported political demands were produced and a political organisation established to represent all sections of Bahraini opinion. This organisation, the General Assembly, in turn held elections for its leadership group – the Higher Executive Committee. The committee was made up of eight prominent Bahrainis, of which four were Sunni and four Shia. The General Assembly's key demands were for the formation of a legislative council and a higher

appeal court, the writing of codified criminal and civil codes, and permitting the formation of trade unions. While the Bahrain government made some concessions, the lack of progress resulted in the Higher Executive Committee declaring a week-long strike starting on 4 December 1954. Despite the strike and subsequent protest actions, little changed.

Resentment against the British saw a large jeering crowd build on 2 March 1956 when the British foreign secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, visited Bahrain. Demonstrators threw rocks at the secretary's car convoy and blocked the roads. On 11 March, a riot broke out with the police grossly overreacting and shooting dead three and wounding many others. In response, the Higher Executive Committee called another strike. Based on the poor police response which was subsequently attributed to inadequate leadership and a lack of riot training, the British were concerned that the police would not be able to keep order. Consequently, a company of the King's Royal



Men of the Bahrain State Police doing rifle drills in the Manama Police Fort, 1952. The rifle appears to be a No.1 Mark III*. The policeman in the foreground wears a 1907 Pattern sword bayonet on his leather belt. In the background is the camel section preparing for a patrol. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

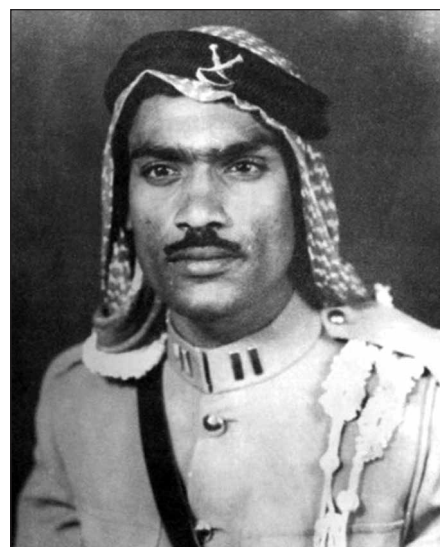
Rifle Corps was immediately flown in from Sharjah with a second company following shortly after. Bahrain in the following weeks remained relatively calm, with the State Police maintaining control without intervention by the British Army. The strike and protests

evacuated to Awali. Additional police guards had been deployed to protect key buildings, and as a precaution, a company of Cameron Highlanders arrived in Awali from Aden to reinforce two companies of the Gloucestershire Regiment which were already stationed on the island.

On 2 November, an indefinite strike was declared and another parade descended into arson and looting. The police initially put up roadblocks on the causeway to Muharraq but had to withdraw, whereupon groups looted and set fire to the accommodation of the BOAC near Muharraq airport. Destruction continued into the following day, and recognising the situation could not be contained



A Mounted Policeman of the Bahrain State Police, 1950s. He is wearing a red turban with the 1939 headdress badge, khaki tunic and jodhpurs, brown Sam Browne and belt, and riding boots. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)



The high-collar winter police uniform with collar rank bars of a lieutenant. The officer is Lieutenant (later Major General) Hassan Issa Al-Hassan. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

started to have some positive outcomes from the perspective of the reformists. One was an agreement that Belgrave would retire before the end of the year, and another was that the government would recognise the Higher Executive Committee, now known as the Committee for National Unity (CNU).

Fitful discussions between the CNU and the government continue until Israel invaded Sinai on 29 October 1956. On 1 November, students from secondary and technical schools supported by the CNU paraded through Manama and Muharraq shouting anti-West slogans. Concerned about the potential threat to Europeans on Muharraq, the police moved to protect the families of employees of BOAC (British Overseas Airways Corporation), Gulf Aviation and the RAF. That day European and American families in Manama were

by the police, the government of Bahrain requested British military assistance. On 3 November, British troops started patrolling roads and removing roadblocks. Advance elements of 1 Battalion, King's Shropshire Light Infantry had also arrived from Nairobi, with the whole battalion arriving over the following week, as did 73 Field Squadron Royal Engineers. British Army elements also patrolled the oil field and Sitra refinery to guard against sabotage. A curfew was imposed starting on 3 November, with curfew breakers being arrested. Gatherings were banned and those unwilling to disperse following a warning did so when the police used tear gas and a few shots from Greener police shotguns.

Another response of the Bahrain government was to declare the CNU an illegal organisation and arrested its leadership. By 10 November, Manama and Muharraq had returned to almost normality, the curfew had ended the day before and the evacuated Europeans had returned to Manama. However, this was not the end of the protests. For example, on 11 November another demonstration occurred with the police making some 50 arrests.

On 23 December 1956, the five leaders of the CNU were put on trial. In addition to charges relating to various protests, they were charged with conspiring to assassinate the ruler and Belgrave and to overthrow the government. The trial was held at the police station in Budaya rather than in Manama. This was both to minimise the risk of protests in Manama and to ensure the ease of movement of the accused as Budaya was the landing point for the prison island of Jidda. After a very short trial, all five were given prison terms of ten to 14 years, with the three receiving the longest sentences being transported by one of the Royal Navy's Gulf Squadron, HMS *Loch Insh*, for imprisonment on St. Helena. (All three were released in 1961 and as their detention was recognised as being unlawful, they received compensation from the British Government.) The 50 arrested following the 11 November protest were sent to a hastily established compound in the desert, and over subsequent months, around half were released with the rest being banished or imprisoned on Jidda Island.

The arrests and overwhelming security response ended the movement for reform – at least for the next few years. The state also took measures to ensure political activism did not remerge; private newspapers were closed, the police were strengthened and individuals/groups considered politically engaged were monitored by the newly formed Police Special Branch. By January 1957, British authorities were sufficiently confident that the police could maintain order and most of its British Army elements were withdrawn. However, two companies of infantry would remain in Bahrain indefinitely as both a local and regional response force.



A Bahrain policeman standing sentry at an unknown police station, 1950s. In the foreground is a police officer, probably the *havaladar* in charge of the station. Both policeman are wearing winter dress of a brown pullover. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

The immediate post-war years saw the State Police slowly modernising which accelerated following the Shia-Sunni violence of 1953 and 1954, and the March 1956 unrest.

In late 1945, a team of eight seconded British police officers arrived in Bahrain to assist the development of the State Police. These came from the Metropolitan Police, Northamptonshire Constabulary, Birmingham City Police and Worcestershire Constabulary. The team was headed by Inspector Charles H. Crowe and Sergeant Ronald Cochrane, who would later become the head of Qatar's police. The other four police members were constables. As was common with seconded British personnel, all were given a higher local rank – the sergeant became an inspector and the constables became sergeants – and given leadership of police departments and functions. Several of the secondees at their end of their posting returned to their home police services and were replaced by others. Others resigned from their service and remained on in the State Police as contract officers. An example was Constable J. Hyde from the Metropolitan Police who by 1955 became Superintendent in charge of the Traffic Police Department.

The Shia-Sunni violence of 1953 and 1954 led to a significant evolution in the police force. While the force was eventually able to contain unrest, it revealed weakness and inefficiencies – notably in riot response and equipment, poor leadership and the force's small size. To lead the police expansion, Colonel A.H. St.G. Hammersley was hired as Assistant Commandant in 1954. Given Belgrave's other responsibility, Hammersley effectively served as the Commandant, a post he formally assumed in March 1956. Hammersley had long experience in the Middle East, serving in the Egyptian Army from 1919 to 1936 and as Governor of Sinai from 1936 to 1946. Additional British officers were also engaged to assist with the reform. In terms of new capability, the most significant to be formed was a paramilitary mobile wing of the State Police. This became equipped with 12 Humber Light Reconnaissance Car Scout Cars fitted with Vickers-Berthier light machine guns, and infantry support weapons including two 2-inch mortars. The armoured cars were obtained from the RAF in Iraq.

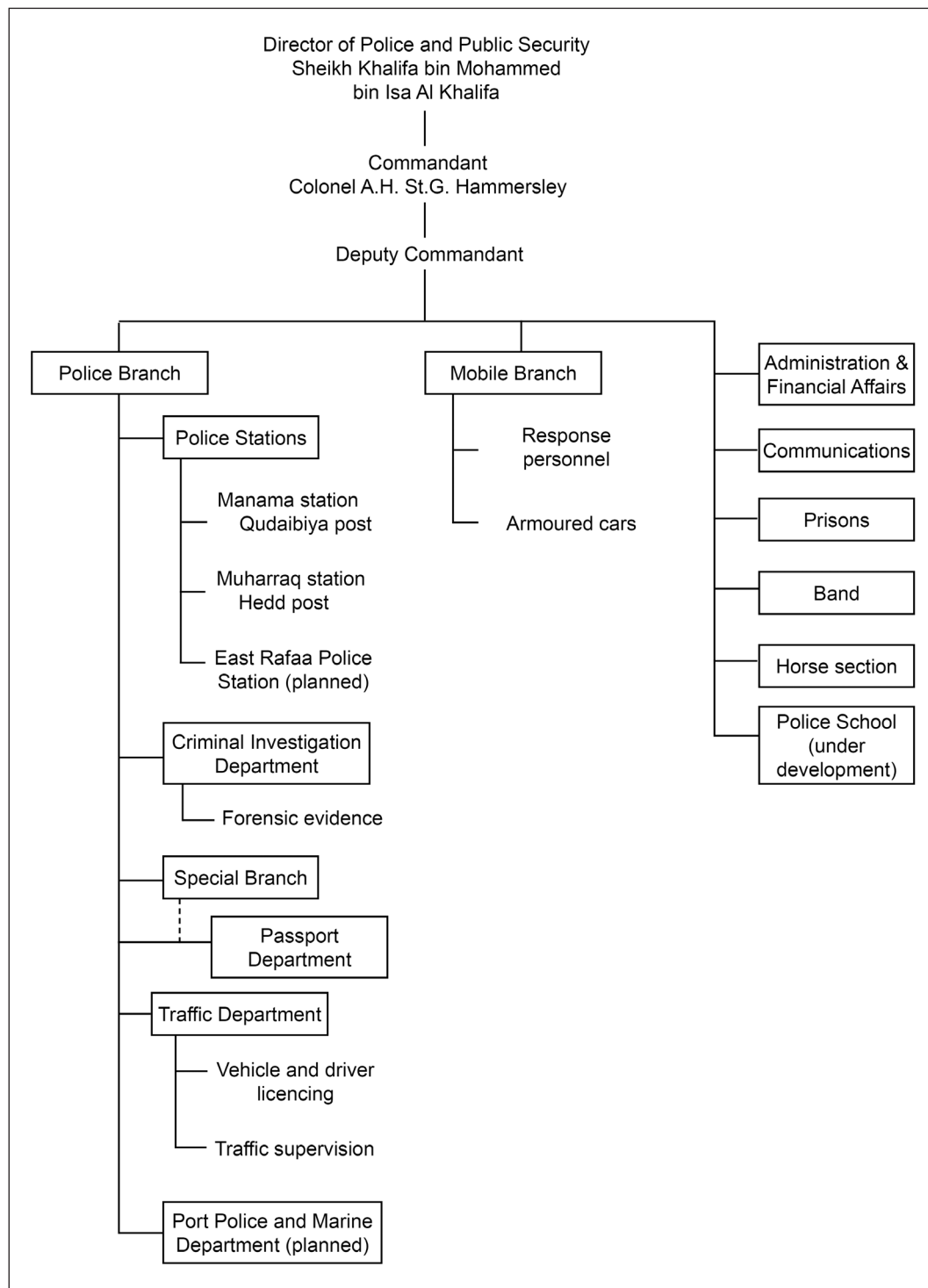


Diagram 1: Bahrain State Police, late 1956. (Diagram by Athol Yates)

At the end of 1955, the State Police strength was three superintendents, two inspectors, one sub-inspector, 410 NCOs and men, 28 cadet officers and 266 armed *natur*s. Some 155 of its NCOs and men were tasked with standing duties, notably serving as guards, police station personnel, traffic police and prison guards. *Natur*s were located at 16 points around the islands of Bahrain. Non-Bahrainis dominated the officer and NCOs ranks. This can be seen in the Traffic Police Department in 1955. It consisted of one British superintendent, two non-Bahraini Arab inspectors, one Pakistani *havildar*, four non-Bahraini Arab NCOs and 37 men.

Given the lacklustre performance of the State Police in the March 1956 unrest, more experienced officers and NCOs were hired. In August 1956, six British officers arrived, increasing the total number of British officers in the force to 12. This rose to 16 in March 1957. Two

seconded Iraqi officers arrived in August 1956, with a handful more arriving subsequently. In terms of general manpower, the goal was to have a police force of 1,000. However this could not be achieved through local recruitment so campaigns were run to attract South Yemenis and Jordanian Bedu. By the end of 1956, the State Police had grown to over 600 officers and men (19 officers plus 594 NCOs and men), in addition to 406 *natur*s.

In 1955, a Police Special Branch was established. This intelligence and investigatory group focused on subversion, terrorism and hostile political activity. The Special Branch was headed and mostly staffed by Britons. Linked to the establishment of the Special Branch was the decision to bring the immigration department (known as the Passport Department) under police control. This allowed Special Branch to better track and control the movement of suspects into and out of the country, and use the withdrawal of passports and citizenship as a means of controlling political activism.

1955 and 1956 saw a range of other policing improvements. A Criminal Investigation Department supported by forensic laboratories was established. A police school was also created but suffered from a lack of instructional staff for a number of years. In 1957, the British police officer, Assistant Superintendent T.A. Fitzgerald

was appointed to head up the school.

In 1957, the Port Police and Marine Department was formed which merged the existing police launches used for both purposes. At that time, the department consisted of 19 officers and men, 19 boatmen, and six craft. Its functions included targeting smuggling operations and stopping people without passports from entering Bahrain, sea traffic control and rescue, and border security. Additional police stations and posts were built with one of the first being the East Riffa Police Station. Around this time, the Police Band was reorganised, new instruments were purchased, and several Goanese bandsmen were enlisted from India including an experienced bandmaster. The structure of the Directorate of Police and Public Security in late 1956 is shown in Diagram 1. In early 1957, the Directorate of Police and Public Security was reorganised



The Chief of Police and Public Security, Sheikh Mohammed bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, 1961–67. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

and the mobile wing which was established in 1955 was abolished. Its men were mostly transferred to the new Police Depot which was the parent formation for training and provided regular guards for government buildings, embassies, public utilities and educational institutions, plus personnel for ceremonial duties and the riot squad. At this time, only one-third of the Directorate was Bahraini with the rest being expatriates, notably Omani and Baluchi.

THE 1960s, THE UNREST OF THE MID-1960s AND GROWTH IN THE DIRECTORATE OF POLICE AND PUBLIC SECURITY

While the activism of the late 1950s did not result in substantive reforms to the political system, the government recognised the need to change and started spending more on education, health, infrastructure, housing and other areas to improve living standards. While there were some token reforms to the machinery of government, control over government remained as in the past, that is in the hands of the ruler and Al Khalifa family. By the late 1950s, the ageing ruler had passed much of the state's control over to his son, Sheikh Isa. Thus, when he became the new ruler in November 1961, Sheikh Isa bin Salman did not substantially change governmental arrangements, policy and attitude towards political activism. His brother, Sheikh Mohammad bin Salman, was appointed in 1961 as the new Chief of Police and Public Security.

Despite the lack of visible political activity in Bahrain in the early 1960s, this did not mean there was no desire for change. Bahrainis abroad, and students in particular, interacted with various pan-Arab, Nasserist and leftist inspired groups, and built relations with them. This led to the establishment of clandestine groups in Bahrain. The oldest such group was the National Liberation Front, a leftist group established in 1955. Another significant one was the pan-Arab Movement of Arab Nationalists which in the 1960s became the Marxist-Leninist aligned Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Occupied Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG). Both of these groups played a leading role in the push for reforms in the mid-to late 1960s. None of the groups were sectarian nor ethnic based. While each had their ideological agendas, they all shared some common objectives, notably to end the British presence in Bahrain and throughout the Arabian Gulf, and to end the absolute monarchy in Bahrain.

The first major civil unrest occurred in March 1965. Its spark was the mass redundancy of BAPCO employees following the commissioning on a new automated plant. In sympathy, senior



Military uniform for police officers in the 1960s. The officer is Brigadier General Nasser Mohammed Al Musallam. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

school students at Manama Secondary School organised a sit-in. The police's response was heavy-handed resulting in a number of students being injured and escalating the protest to street demonstration. The various underground political groups supported the action and added additional demands to their existing ones. These now included reversing the dismissal of BAPCO employees, recognising the right to form unions, allowing a free press, freeing all political prisoners and dismissing all foreigners in the police. A general strike started on 10 March and for the rest of the month there was almost daily protest action in both Manama and Muharraq. Rallies were held, street barricades were set up and buildings set on fire. The police themselves were targeted, including the storming of police stations for weapons, and attacking Special Branch personnel. On 5 March 1965, the head of Special Branch, Superintendent Robert (Bob) Langdale, plus his brother William who was also in Bahrain's Special Branch, and wife and daughter were shot at as they travelled in their car between HMS *Jufair* and Manama. Later that month, assailants placed explosives in the cars of Langdale and his Jordanian assistant, Yousif Mohsen. These detonated with Langdale losing a leg and Mohsen sustaining back injuries.

The police responded with force killing six to eight, and wounding numbers of protesters. While the British military was available, only the Royal Navy was called upon. Its helicopters dropped tear gas. The police finally re-established control by the beginning of April through the mass arrests of protesters, their leaders and members of the political groups, plus imposing a curfew which lasted to mid-April. The ability of the police to contain the civil unrest with very limited assistance from the British military pointed to improvements being made to the force since the 1950s. However, the unrest also pointed to the growing threat of ideological and labour movements to the ruler and his regime. The ruler decided the response should be suppression not concessions. Many of those arrested were imprisoned and exiled, and those suspected of being politically active being monitored by Special Branch.

The March 1965 riots led to a significant growth in the Directorate of Police and Public Security and efforts to improve capabilities, notably countersubversion. These were supported by three ruler



Brigadier General Salman Sheikh bin Mohammed Al Kahlifa, 1950s or 1960s. (Bahrain Police Museum)



Bahrain mounted police with white over red pennant on a lance, 1960s. Their uniform consisted of a dark blue or black caubeen with a red and white hackle just above the headdress badge. The badge is the 1939 Pattern with a red felt backing. He is wearing the winter uniform consisting of a brown pullover with reinforced shoulders, red cummerbund, a Sam Browne and belt, red lanyard, shirt and riding breeches in light khaki and boots with spurs. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

decrees (collectively known as the 1965 Law of Public Security) which enabled the ruler to maintain a state of emergency indefinitely justified on the basis of protecting Bahrain's national security from domestic and foreign enemies. It also banned political parties and increased authority of the police to detain suspects.

Between 1965 and the end of 1969, the police force's size grew by 50 percent, increasing from around one thousand to 1,430 men. This was less than hoped due to two reasons. Firstly, Adenis and



Riot squad member with shield, baton, and helmet, 1960s. In his hands are a CS gas grenade, and a *lathi* with a hilt guard. The shield is curved. He is wearing a gas mask which is carried in a side pouch. He is wearing a single brass chevron, indicating he is a lance corporal. The cloth badge above the chevron appears to be a parachute wing. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)



Traffic police, 1960s. The large 1939 headdress badge mounted on a red shield was worn on a white police helmet for traffic duties from 1960. This badge with the red shield was also worn by the Police Band members. (Bahrain Police and Public Security)

Yemenis who had started to be hired in large numbers in the late 1950s were now leaving and returning to their homelands due to optimism as both Britain and Egypt were withdrawing their forces. Secondly, any Bahraini applicant who had some connection with political action was being rejected. New sources of police labour were required so Pakistani ex-servicemen started to be recruited. Another source of uniformed police was to convert around 100 *natur*s to police members.

The 1965 attack on Special Branch personnel was of great concern as this was the same tactic used effectively by insurgents in Aden.



The Police Band, 1960. The band wears an Indian-style uniform with the bandmaster wearing officer dress and the newly issued caubeen headdress. The band was formed in 1935, mostly from the younger brothers of policemen. Originally it played entirely by ear but in 1936, an Indian ex-army bandmaster was engaged as an instructor and the band then learned to play from music. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)



Bahrain Police Band, 1961. The Police Band is now wearing the new ceremonial dress introduced in 1961. It includes the caubeen, cap badge and hackle, white uniform and a red cummerbund. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

The Political Agent encouraged the ruler to hire Ian Henderson as the Special Branch's new head. Henderson had gained notoriety as a Special Branch officer in Kenya where he was seen as instrumental in ending the Mau Mau crisis in the late 1950s. Once hired in Bahrain, he brought in several of his former colleagues from Kenya, including Derek Franklin and Brian Shore. (Henderson would remain the head of Special Branch, which in 1973 was renamed the General Directorate for State Security Investigations, until 1998.) By early 1968, Henderson had under him a team of six British officers, who focused on leftist movements. Special Branch gathered intelligence on suspected dissidents through surveillance, informers and agents, raids, interrogations and arrests. It appears by the end of the 1960s, Bahrain's main leftist movements had been dismantled or completely penetrated by Special Branch informers.



Bahrain mounted police, 1960s. Note the armed *natur* looking on. (Martin Gerner)

The mid-1960s demonstrations pointed to the need for a dedicated police unit focused on crowd and riot control. Up to now, the responding police group was ad hoc and drew from any available personnel. Around 1967, a police mobile wing was re-established with the group now known as the Mobile Police Formation. The

force was initially under the command of Inspector P.L. Whitehouse and then under Sheikh Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa in 1968. Most of the wing's personnel were recruited from Oman, with instructors mostly from Pakistan. The 250-man mobile force was based at newly built barracks located between the ruler's palace at Riffa and BAPCO compound at Awali. The force was equipped with rifles, Greener lever-action police shotguns, CS gas and batons. It had four Shorland armoured cars. The force was under the control of Special Branch.

The second half of the 1960s saw a small increase in the percentage of the police force who were Bahraini. In 1965 it was about 25 percent, and in 1970 it was 32 percent. For all of the 1960s, Britons would continue to fill the most important police posts – Police Commandant, Police Deputy Commandant and head of Special Branch. In 1966, J.S. Bell took over from Colonel Robert H. Winder as Commandant. Bell had been a RAF officer but since 1946 had served in the Nigerian Police, retiring in 1964 as Deputy Commissioner. An Al Khalifa member headed the Mobile Police Formation. Diagram 2 shows the structure of the Directorate of Police and Public Security in 1967. An important point to note is that while both Special Branch and the Mobile Police Formation were technically part of the State Police, they reported directly to the Director of Police and Public Security. The Immigration Department was separate from the State Police and it also reported directly to the Director of Police and Public Security. There was a close connection between Special Branch and both the Immigration and Criminal Investigation departments.

The maritime police by the end of the 1960s was equipped with two Vosper 20-knot launches and 10 motorised dhows. Another significant new capability was the helicopter-equipped Police Air Wing formed in 1965. Over 1965 and 1966, two Westland Scout helicopters arrived with their role being reconnaissance, patrolling and liaison.

The late 1960s saw the ruler consolidating his power via the

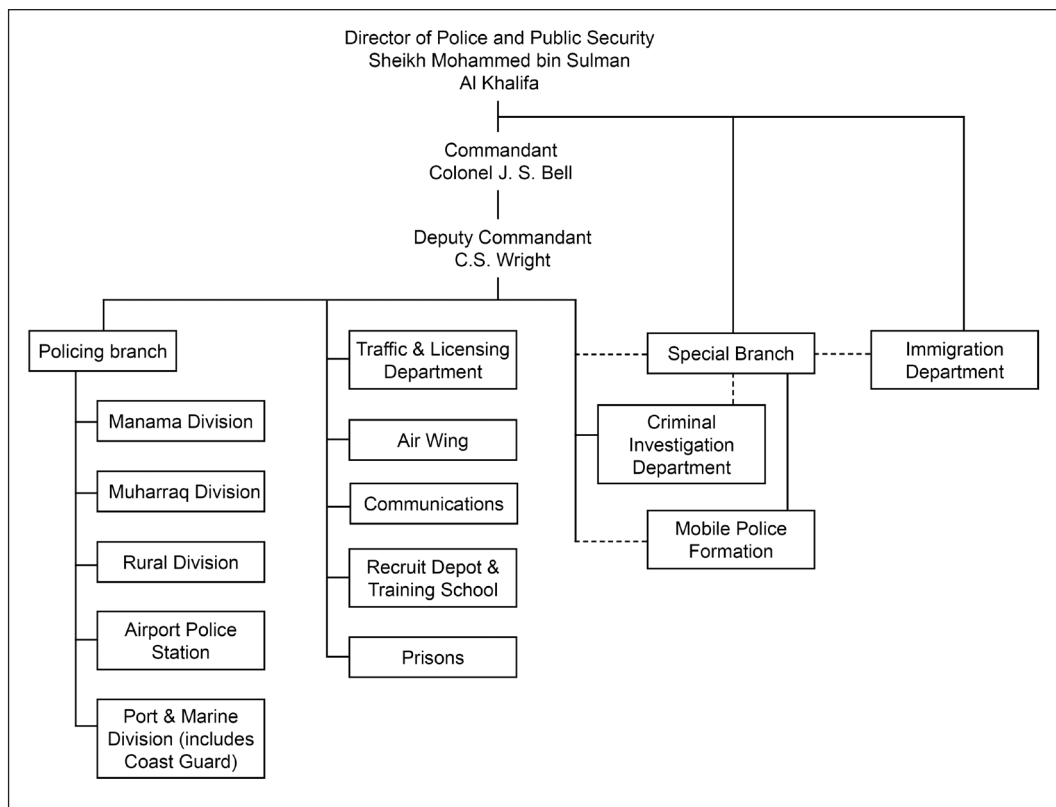


Diagram 2: The structure of the Directorate of Police and Public Security, 1967. (Diagram by Athol Yates)

resignation of his brother as Chief of Police and Public Security in 1967, and his subsequent retirement from public life. He was not replaced which meant that both the Commandant of the State Police and the head of Special Branch now reported directly to the ruler.

THE 1970s AND THE FORMATION OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

While the internal security measures of the late 1960s suppressed both political activism and demands for reform, both would return in the early 1970s resulting in a decade of renewed civil



Bahrain Police Band at practice, 1960s. The uniform includes a white tope, and white jacket and trousers with a red cummerbund and black belt with buckle. The band master is known by his red sash. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

disturbance and more assertive security response.

The early 1970s started with the ruler making some movement towards democracy and government efficiency. One significant change was to create a new central coordination mechanism made up of a 12-member cabinet. It was initially known as the State Council and in 1973 renamed the Council of Ministers. The cabinet was headed by the Prime Minister, but as the ruler appointed the Prime Minister, influenced the Prime Minister's selection of ministers, and retained the authority to veto any decision of cabinet, he very much remained in control of government decisions. The early 1970s saw government entities modernised – the old directorates mostly became ministries such as the Defence Directorate becoming the Ministry of Defence, and the Directorate of Police and Public Security becoming the Ministry of Interior. Another significant change was the ruler's decision to transform the form of government to a constitutional monarchy.

While these changes were generally welcomed by the public and political groups, some wanted faster change and more democratic and civil rights. For workers, a key demand was the right to form trade unions. Efforts to achieve this culminated in a nationwide labour strike in March 1972, which was the first serious civil unrest since the late 1960s. The anti-riot unit of the police responded, and for the first time, it was supported by the Bahrain Defence Force. Although not involved in countering the protests, Bahrain's authorities could also call on support from the Saudi National Guard which had been deployed on request from the ruler to Bahrain in anticipation of the unrest.

While political parties remained banned in Bahrain, existing groups and others sought to mobilise support for their political positions. These included those of the 1960s, notably pan-Arabism, Bahraini nationalism, Baathism and leftism, plus new ones including Shia-based social conservatism and women's rights.

A new constitution was prepared and in December 1973, enacted through a decree by the ruler. The constitution established a semi-legislative body, the National Assembly. A key role of the body was to review legislation sent to it by the ruler or Council of Ministers, and make recommendations to the ruler for their ratification.



The full band of the police in front of the Manama Police Fort. In the 1970s, their uniform changed and became a white *shemagh* and black *agal*, black tunic with the cuffs turned up with three silver buttons on them and high collars, red trousers, black shoes, white belt and silver buckle, and white chevrons with red backing. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)



The Pipes and Drums section of the Police Band wearing work uniform during practice at the Manama Police Fort, 1970s. By this time, the white tope has been replaced by a cap. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

Restricted public elections for 30 members of the National Assembly took place in December 1973. The elected members divided into three main blocs – a leftist one wanting more democracy and freedoms, a Shia one wanting more social restriction such as banning alcohol, and an independent one where each member's position varied on the issue. Collectively, the elected members of the National Assembly frequently adopted positions which were in opposition to that of the ruler and Council of Ministers. Tensions between the government and elected members came to a head after the latter opposed two important national security law proposals.

In December 1974, the government submitted to the National Assembly for ratification the 1974 State Security Law. This was a replacement for the 1965 Law of Public Security. Debate over the legislation was prolonged and heated for it proposed giving the security agencies wide powers of arrest, imprisonment and search if they had suspicion that a person or group had committed acts, made statements or engaged in activities that would undermine internal



Female police members wearing black headdress and khaki dress with black epaulet. Female police were only given the option of wearing a hijab in 2003. The shoulder title states in Arabic 'Assistant to the Officer.' The lanyard was red and white, 1970s. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

security. Suspects could be detained for up to three years without charge or trial. The legislation proposed that prisoners charged with security offences would not be tried in ordinary criminal courts but in a new Security Court where proceedings would be held in secret and there was no right of judicial appeal. Another proposal law which the elected members opposed was the extension of the lease agreement with the US Navy that allowed for it to use part of the old HMS *Jufair* naval base.

Frustrated over the behaviour of the elected members, in August 1975 the ruler dissolved the National Assembly and suspended those articles of the constitution which vested legislative authority in it. This created a situation where the ruler now governed by issuing decrees. One such decree ratified the State Security Law. This law and the ending of the National Assembly enabled the government to reassert control over the state, and contained calls for constitutional and political reform. While some civic leaders had been detained by internal security forces earlier in the year, detentions increased after the dissolution and continued well into 1975.

While the crackdowns saw a decline in leftist, secular and nationalist groups, this was not the case with Islamist and Shia-based conservative movements. These started to grow, motivated by inequality

between Shia and Sunnis in Bahrain, developments in Iran and the desire to establish a 'true' Islamic state. The movements were mostly led by Shia clerics and scholars who used religious discourse and mosques to mobilise public support. A range of conservative groups operated in Bahrain at that time such as the Bahrain Islamic Freedom Movement and Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain. Some advocated political engagement with others advocating violence as the necessary agent of change. Fears over these threats materialised in December 1981 when the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain attempted a coup d'état.

As part of the government reforms of the early 1970s, in 1973 the Directorate of Police and Public Security was reorganised and became the Ministry of Interior. It was headed by a Minister of Interior with the first incumbent being Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa bin Hamad Al Khalifa. He would hold this post until 2004. Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa had attended Sandhurst and had been an inspector in the State Police in 1959. He was appointed the Director of Immigration in 1966 and became the Deputy Director-General of Directorate of Police and Public Security in 1970.

The Bahrain State Police was renamed the Public Security General Directorate in 1970 and to the Bahrain Public Security (BPS) in 1975, and its head changed from Commandant in 1970 to Director-General. This post remained filled by Jim Bell, and he



Female police recruits learning to march. They are wearing a light coloured top, dark trousers, and runners. For formal parades, their shoes were white oxfords. In the background is the supermarket for the police force. 1970s. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)



Female police members in winter dress, 1970s. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)



Mohanna Fadel Al Nuaimi with the rank of First Pilot, Bahrain Police. (Bahrain Police)



Female police members wearing light green tunic and dress, 1970s. The arm patch states 'GHQ Police'. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)



A British Scout helicopter which entered service in 1966. One of the two Scouts was damaged in an accident in 1979. The other was withdrawn from service around 1988. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)



TH-55 Osage military variant of the Hughes 269. These are nowadays widely known as the Schweizer because that company bought all the copyrights for this model from McDonnell Douglas in 1986. This version is fitted with floats and was introduced to the Air Wing in 1974. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)



Manama Police Fort, 1970s. The main entrances to the fort are on the left side and seaward side. The force's horses are in the bottom left. To the left of the fort is the police's parade ground and lines. The parade ground became the home of the Police Air Wing. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

would retain it until 1980. In 1970 the strength of the Bahrain Public Security was 1,626 made up of 63 Bahraini/Arab officers, 27 European officers, 23 officer cadets, 442 NCOs and 1,068 constables. Of the constables, 35 percent were Bahraini. Under the Bahrain Public Security were also 482 *natur*s. In 1980, its strength was 4,886 made up of 109 Bahraini/Arab officers, 13 European officers, 88 officer cadets/women police officers, 1,594 NCOs and 3,082 constables. Under Bahrain Public Security were also 1,508 *natur*s.

Structurally, in 1980 the BPS was organised into territorial units, operational formations and support entities. Territorial units were the Security Area Districts of Manama, Muharraq, Mina Sulman, Northern, Central, Southern and Coast Guard. The Coast Guard District came into being in 1973 and was responsible for policing Bahrain's islands. Before 1973, the islands and much of the hinterland of Bahrain Island was under the control of the now disbanded Rural Security Directorate. The Security Area Districts organised general policing and organised foot and mobile patrols, and handling minor crimes and detaining suspects up to the point they were charged at court. Most districts had local court prosecution and custody facilities.

Operational formations with the Criminal Investigation Directorate, Coast Guard Directorate, Emergency Control Room,



A Bahrain Ministry of Interior Coast Guard diver looking at a 'hookah' compressor. It floats in the ring, pumping air to the diver as he tows it around. In the background are the Coast Guard's coastal craft, 1970s. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

Public Security Fire Service, Air Wing Division, Prisons, Public Prosecution Directorate, Remand Centre, Special Security Force Directorate, Traffic and Licensing Directorate, Training Directorate, and the Women Police Directorate. The operational formations were centralised within police headquarters and on call to the Security Area Districts. A number of operational formations posted staff to police stations in the districts. Serious crimes, notably murder, attempted murder, suicide, rape, commercial fraud and financial crime and drug-related offences, were handled by the Criminal Investigation Directorate. This directorate had an investigation laboratory, and fingerprinting, photographic and criminal records sections plus facilities for investigating counterfeiting and drugs-



Bahrain Ministry of Interior Coast Guard practicing their rifle drill on FN rifles, 1970s. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)



Bahrain Police female members. Black shoulder boards carry their rank as officers. They are wearing summer uniform with stand-up collars with badges and lanyard, mid-1970s. (Bahrain Ministry of Interior)

related crime. More complex investigations, such as involving DNA, were referred to facilities abroad. Medical investigations were referred to public medical centres or the Bahrain Police Services' medical centre. While most of the work of the Criminal Investigation Directorate was related to criminal matters, a significant portion of its work was personnel checks for employment carried out on behalf of the Bahian public service and companies. The directorate also issued good conduct and character certifications. The drugs work of the directorate in the 1970s typically involved hashish and opium but in the following decade, would increasingly focus on heroin, morphine, khat and pills, notably Madrax. Drug offences were prosecuted under the Narcotics Drug Act of 1973 which was a successor to the earlier Narcotics Ordinance. The Criminal Investigation Directorate had a link with Interpol since 1975 and was the point of coordination for the exchange of criminal records, fingerprints and photographic records.

The Women Police Directorate was attached to the Criminal Investigation Directorate and was responsible for investigations of offences involving females and juveniles both as suspect offenders and as case victims. In addition to their central duties, female police personnel were posted to all Security Area Districts and the Remand

and Rehabilitation Centre. This centre was opened in 1973 at Al Khamis. Female police did not undertake general police duties such as traffic patrol, nor did they investigate cases involving men. Women started to be employed in police administration starting around 1967. The first female officer was an Irish police officer, I.M. Darragh, who arrived on a two-year secondment from the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Her secondment was renewed for another two years in 1969 and during this time, she started training female recruits for the Women Police Directorate,

established in 1970. The first female officer cadets entered training in 1970, the head of the Directorate became a Bahraini in 1974, and the first women to be promoted to the rank of captain occurred in 1981. In 1979 the Women Police Directorate was amalgamated with Criminal Investigation Directorate. By this time, the Women Police Directorate had around 120 members which included civilian support staff.

The Coast Guard Directorate was established in 1973 and its operation centre was at Bandar Al Dar. Firefighting and cases of suspected arson was within the remit of the Public Security Fire Service. The Fire Service was formed in 1976 as a formation within the Ministry of Interior. Before this time, fire response was the responsibility of the municipalities although it had started to be transferred to the Ministry of Interior in the early 1970s. In 1970, the fire services had just 35 members, four fire stations and nine fire fighting vehicles. By 1980, it had 252 members, seven stations and 33 vehicles. The Special Security Force Directorate was a unit responsible for emergency crowd and riot control. The Traffic and Licensing Directorate was responsible for traffic control, accidents and road offences and their investigation. The Training Directorate was one of the largest directorates and accounted for around 25 percent of the of the police force's strength. It provided training in general and specialist policing as well as profession training for staff of particular formations. It included the Training School which was relocated from the Police Fort in 1972 to the old RAF base at Muharraq. At this site, a *natur's* school was also established.

Support entities consisted of administration, finance, supplies, maintenance, engineering, and civilian groups. Outside of the BPS but within the Ministry of Interior were the Directorate of the Immigration and Passports, and the General Directorate for State Security Investigations, previously known as Special Branch. The General Directorate for State Security Investigations, also known as the Security and Intelligence Service, became as part of the 1971 reorganisation more focused on state and political intelligence. While both the State Security Investigations and Immigration and Passports Directorates were autonomous units, as circumstances required they became operationally linked.

The General Directorate for State Security Investigations and its linked anti-riot and other internal security forces expanded as unrest increased. British, Jordanians and Pakistanis held more senior positions in these forces compared to the Public Security General Directorate. This period saw a new, combined Ministry

Table 3: Ministry of Interior ranks used the 1970s with their equivalent ranks used in earlier decades

Ministry of Interior ranks used in the 1970s	Arabic	Equivalent ranks used in early decades
Lieutenant General	فريق	
Major General	لواء	
Brigadier	عميد	
Colonel	عقيد	Chief superintendent
Lieutenant Colonel	مقدم	Senior superintendent
Major	رائد	Superintendent
Captain	نقيب	Assistant superintendent
Lieutenant	ملازم أول	<i>Subadar/Inspector</i>
Second Lieutenant	ملازم	Sub- inspector/deputy sub-inspector
Assistant Officer	وكيل ضابط	
Warrant Officer Lieutenant WMT (<i>Wakeel Mulazim</i>)	وكيل ملازم	Assistant sub-inspector
Assistant Lieutenant MMT (<i>Mosaad Mulazim</i>)	مساعد ملازم	
Senior Sergeant (<i>Rais Orata</i>)	رئيس عرفاء	Head <i>havaladar</i>
Sergeant (<i>Rais Areef</i>)	رئيس عرفاء	<i>Havaladar</i>
Corporal (<i>Areef</i>)	عريف	<i>Naik</i>
Lance Corporal (<i>Naib Areef</i>)	نائب عريف	Lance <i>naik</i>
Policeman First Class (<i>Shurti Awwal</i>)	شرطي أول	
Policeman (<i>Shurta</i>)	شرطي	<i>Sepoy</i>
Sergeant Guard (<i>Raqeeb Natur</i>)	رقيب ناطور	
Corporal Guard (<i>Areef Natur</i>)	عريف ناطور	
Guard (<i>Natur</i>)	ناطور	



Bahrain Defence Force sergeant in battle dress with the infantry battalion cloth patch worn above the chevrons, 1970s. (Bahrain Military Museum)

of Interior and Ministry of Defence approach being taken in response to large political protests. It involved the military manning checkpoints at major intersections and strategic points to control the flow of vehicles and people. Anti-riot groups would engage with demonstrators, and if necessary, make arrests. State security would monitor demonstrations and identify participants and their leaders, leading to their subsequent surveillance, prevention from entering/exiting Bahrain, interrogation and/or arrest.

The Coast Guard became a directorate-equivalent in 1975, and that year saw the arrival of the first of its five new British patrol boats. By the start of the 1980s, the Coast Guard consisted of around 17 mainly unarmed vessels and had a strength of around 200. The fleet consisted of Vosper Thornycroft, Singapore, Cheverton and Fairey Sword craft. Expatriates dominated the Coast Guard's supervisory and maintenance positions.

The Police Air Wing grew notably in the 1970s. Adding to its fleet of two Westland Scouts were three TH-55 Osage military variant of the Hughes H269C (introduced 1974, withdrawn 1979), two Hughes MD 500D 369D (introduced 1978, withdrawn 1990s), one McCulloch J-2 autogyro (introduced 1971, withdrawn 1981) and one Bell 205A-1 (introduced 1978).

Bahrain Ministry of Interior Ranks

Over the period 1923–1980, the Bahrain Police and public security forces used a variety of rank systems, all of which drew

heavily from those used in British India and Britain. The table shows the Ministry of Interior used by the 1970s plus their equivalents used in earlier decades.

Bahrain Armed Forces

Bahrain established an armed force in 1968, initially named the Bahrain National Guard, and renamed in 1969 the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF). Its first name reflected the ruler's original vision for the force which was to create a Bahraini equivalent of the Saudi Arabian National Guard. Like the Saudi force, the plan for the Bahrain National Guard was for it to be made up of tribal elements loyal to the Al Khalifa family. Given the small number of suitable Bahraini tribesmen, the ruler originally proposed to use Jordanian Bedu. The British opposed the idea of forming a military as its position was that ruler should instead invest more in the Bahrain State Police and Special Branch. The reason for this was that a military would be too expensive for the state and its existence would actually increase insecurity as it could be a source of rebellion.

Following Britain's decision in January 1968 to leave the Gulf by 1971, the ruler decided it was time to form a military. Given this situation, British now reversed its position. Brigadier Ivor Hollyer, Commander British Land Forces Gulf, provided the initial force design for the ruler. He recommended that the force consist of an infantry battalion group (around 300 men) plus support elements of armoured cars, artillery and helicopters. The ruler agreed and declared that the official establishment date of the new Bahrain

Table 4: Bahrain Military Leadership

Dates		
1969–71	Sheikh Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa	Commander-in-Chief, Bahrain National Guard/Bahrain Defence Force, and head of the Directorate of Defence, and between 1971–88 as Commander-in-Chief, Bahrain Defence Force, and Minister of Defence
1974–88	Sheikh Khalifa bin Ahmed bin Salman bin Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa	Chief of Staff, Bahrain Defence Force

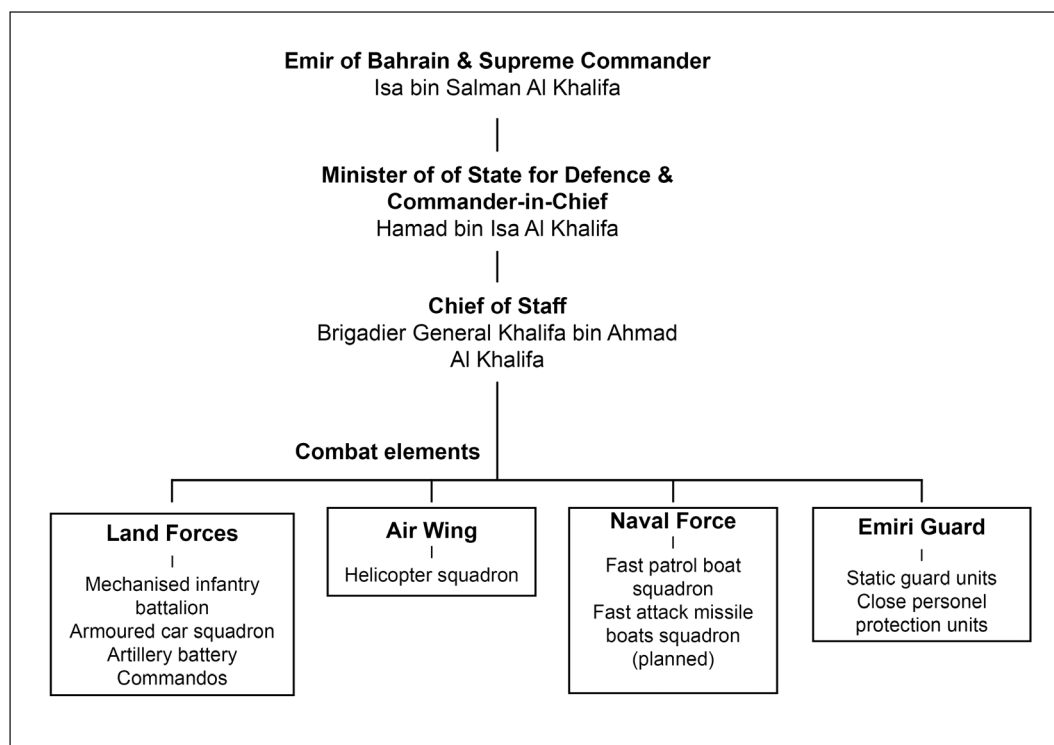


Diagram 3: Bahrain Defence Force, 1980. (Diagram by Athol Yates)



Bahrain Defence Force platoon training in full kit, circa 1971. The helmet is the British Model 44 Pattern, and the webbing 1937 Pattern. The battle dress uniform was locally made. The parade uniform comprised a red and white *shemagh* and black *agal*. Khaki berets were issued except for the Armoured Corps who wore black berets. Khaki shirts and trousers were worn with black boots. Stable belts were red-white-red in equal parts with a black leather buckle worn in the front. (Bahrain Military Museum).

armed forces was 1 August 1968. A call for volunteers was made, and surprisingly a large number of Bahrainis stepped forward. This stood in contrast to the police which could never attract sufficient numbers of nationals, probably due to their lower pay, personal safety and unpleasantness of enforcing rules and arresting people.

The Bahrain Police Special Branch reviewed all applicants to join the military and recommended rejections for those considered connected to leftist groups. This was expanded to those connected to Shia conservatism and political Islam during the 1970s. Shia Bahrainis would not as a principle be banned from joining the BDF however, they would never constitute more than one quarter of the force and very few could become officers at that time. Training of the first batch of 150 recruits for the military started in October 1968. Officer training starting the following year with cadets being sent mostly in Jordan.

To ensure loyalty of the BDF, the ruler tasked his oldest son and heir apparent, Sheikh Hamad bin Salman Al Khalifa, to lead the force. The then 19-year-old had just graduated from Mons Officer Cadet School. To establish the new force, the ruler asked for support from King Hussain of Jordan, who agreed to provide a Jordanian military training team. Around a dozen Jordanians arrived in latter half of 1968, led initially by Lieutenant Colonel Motlog Eid then Lieutenant Colonel Rushdi Areiqat. This team would remain well into the 1970s and underpinned the force's capabilities in that decade as its members filled senior administrative and advisory posts plus provided training leadership.

In 1969, Sheikh Hamad bin Salman Al Khalifa was formally appointed as the BDF's first Commander-in-Chief and

the new government agency responsible for overseeing it – the Directorate of Defence. Following the 1971 reforms which establish a new cabinet structure, a post of Minister of Defence was created with Sheikh Hamad filling it. He would continue to hold this position as well as that of Commander-in-Chief until 1988, which was when he became the ruler of Bahrain.

Another significant appointment to the Bahrain armed force in 1969 was Sheikh Khalifa bin Ahmed bin Salman bin Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa. He was a descendant of the branch of the Al Khalifa family which went into exile following the attacks on Baharna villages in 1923. While the branch had returned to Bahrain, it would not again become powerful until in the 1960s the then ruler (Sheikh Isa bin Salman) started to give them more public responsibilities. The ruler's support for this part of the family engendered its fierce loyalty to the ruler and his son. From 1969, Sheikh Khalifa bin Ahmed rapidly rose through the ranks and in 1974, he was appointed Chief of Staff of the BDF. He held this position until 1988 when he was appointed Minister of Defence, and in 2008 Commander-in-Chief of the Bahrain Defence Force.

The initial focus of the BDF was internal security – notably assisting the police and public security forces, being a counter to any rebellion from these forces, and providing a personal protection guard for the ruler and his close family. The BDF in its early years was purely a land force, with any needed air or maritime support being provided by the Ministry of Interior's air or maritime wing. The second half of the 1970s saw the force become more militarised and focused on the potential of countering raids by externally supported and heavily armed groups, or even foreign forces such as Iranian revolutionary forces. The 1973 oil crisis saw the price of oil increase which meant a huge increase in revenue for the Bahrain

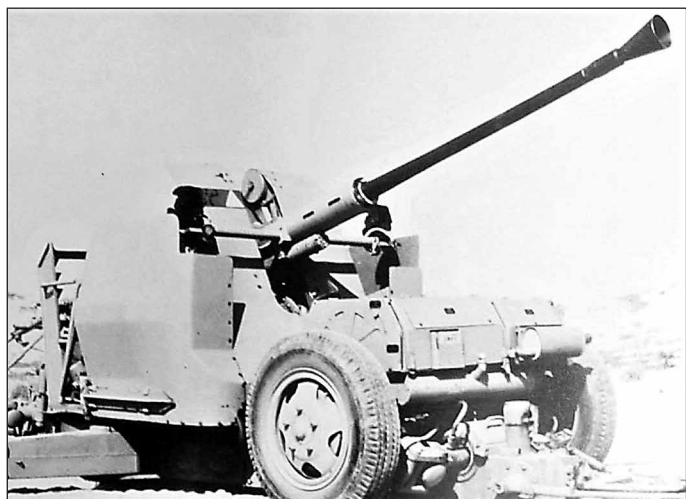


L-118 105mm Field Gun in use by the BDF. (Authors' collection)

government. This fuelled the expansion of the BDF in the second half of the 1970s.

Armoured vehicles started arriving in 1971 – with the first being around eight Shorland armoured patrol cars. This was followed by eight each of Ferret and Saladin armoured cars arriving in 1972. The armoured cars were structured into an independent armoured car company. The armoured force would be augmented by 20 to 23 AML-90 armoured cars arriving between 1978 and 1980. Heavy weapon support by the mid-1970s consisted of six MoBAT 120mm recoilless rifles and six 81mm mortars.

Initially, the BDF's infantry was vehicle-mounted. These became mechanised when Panhard M-3 VTT armoured personnel carriers started arriving in 1978. Some 110 armoured cars arrived which



Bahrain Defence Force Bofors 40mm L70 anti-aircraft gun. (Bahrain Military Museum)



Bahrain Special Forces armed with Armalite M16s, late 70s or early 80s. (Bahrain Army Museum)

included ambulance, command post, engineering, recovery and 81mm mortar variants. Eight AT-105 Saxon were also ordered in 1979, with these arriving in 1981.

The artillery element started with 25-pounders and these were replaced with eight L-118 105mm towed guns in 1980. Air defence was provided by 16 Bofors 40mm L70 anti-aircraft guns, plus 14 launchers of the RBS 70 man-portable air defence systems which were purchased in 1980. Its air defence capabilities meant that protection was limited to just point defence of a few select locations.

In 1972, the BDF established the Emiri Guard which was tasked with protecting the ruler and his immediate family. It provided both close personal protection and static guarding. The group was initially led by the first Jordanian team leader, Lieutenant Colonel Motlog Eid, and was manned by many of the ruler's retainers. Nominally the Emiri Guard was under the BDF, however due to its links with the ruler it had considerable autonomy. By 1975, the Emiri Guard consisted of 600 men.

BDF support units established in the 1970s included an engineering workshop which maintained and repaired all vehicles including armoured vehicles, and light and heavy weapons. The engineering workshop served also as a technical institute. A medical detachment was raised in 1974 and a military hospital was built in 1979. A commando unit was formed around 1976. Also established was a signals group and a training branch which provided instruction on weapons, intelligence, security, first aid, planning and organisation, firefighting, police training, languages, driving and vehicle maintenance.

By 1976, the force consisted of 1,500 men organised into an infantry battalion, an armoured car squadron plus support and administrative units. During the second half of the 1970s, both an air and naval wing was established to support the land force. As the wings grew into separate services, the BDF was restructured to create the Royal Bahraini Army, Navy and Airforce. By 1980, the BDF had grown to near 2,000 personnel which included land, air and sea forces as shown in Diagram 3. Its land combat elements then consisted of a mechanised infantry battalion, an armoured car squadron, and artillery battery. Its headquarters was located at West Riffa and training areas at East Riffa.

The Air Wing

Preparation to establish the Air Wing started in earnest in 1974. In October, the first batch of trainee pilots were sent to Saudi Arabia's King Faisal Air Academy to study aerospace sciences. In both 1974 and 1975, groups of NCOs were sent to the UK for technical, engineering and maintenance training, as were pilots to undertake advanced training. On 8 May 1976, the ruler of Bahrain announced the formation of the Air Wing. The Air Wing received two light Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Bohm (MBB) Bo.105 helicopters in 1977 with another arriving 1978. Their duties were liaison, communications, patrolling and transport. The helicopter squadron was initially based at Bahrain International Airport, and moved to



An Al Riffa-class (Lurssen Werft FPB-38) fast patrol boat. (Ivan Gogin, Navypedia)

the newly constructed Riffa Air Base in late 1979. The size of the Air Wing in 1980 was around 100. During the 1970s it suffered from a shortage of skilled Bahrain manpower, leaving it dependent on Pakistani, Jordanian and Indian pilots and maintenance personnel.

Tensions with Iran and internal security concerns led to the Air Wing's expansion, resulting in orders being placed in 1980 for 12 Agusta-Bell AB.212s (arrived in 1982). This would then create a helicopter wing made up of two squadrons: No. 3 Squadron (AB.212) and No. 7 Squadron (Bo.105C). The force would remain a rotary-winged force until the mid-1980s when Northrop F-5E Tiger IIs were acquired. The addition of combat fixed-wing aircraft would result in the force becoming an independent service and renamed the Bahrain Amiri Air Force in 1987. When the state became a kingdom in 2002, it was renamed Royal Bahraini Air Force.

Naval Forces

Consideration to form a Bahraini navy dates to 1972 when the Minister of Defence asked the US to advise on the formation of a coastal guarding force. The proposal recommended four fast patrol boats and one Short Take Off and Landing aircraft. This proposal was not advanced, leaving the responsibility for coastal protection with the Ministry of Interior's Coast Guard.

In 1974, a Naval Wing of the BDF was finally formed, and in 1979, it became a separate service named the Bahrain Naval Force (renamed in 1987 the Royal Bahrain Navy). Its first modern vessels were two West German Lurssen Werft FPB-38 fast patrol boats, and two TNC-45 fast attack missile boats, both ordered in 1979. The 188-ton FPB-38s (known as Al Riffa-class) were 38 meters long, mounted one Bofors 40mm gun and two Oerlikon 20mm guns, and equipped with 9GR-600 sea search radar. They had a complement of between 30 and 35. One FPB-38 was commissioned in 1980 (*Al Riffa*), with the other in 1982 (*Hawar*). The 228-ton TNC-45s (known as Al Fateh-class) were 45 meters in length and mounted four single-missile Exocet MM-40 launchers, one 76mm OTO Melara gun, one Bofors 40mm gun and three 7.62mm machine guns. The TNC-45s carried 9LV-226 fire control radar and Sea Giraffe-50HC air search radar, and had a complement of around 40. Both TNC-45s (named *Ahmed Al Fateh* and *Al Jaber*) arrived over 1983–84.

By 1980, the Naval Force had an established strength of between 100 and 200. It was commanded by a seconded Pakistani naval officer, and depended on expatriates, primarily Pakistanis, for maintenance and logistics. The departure of the British from HMS

Julfair in 1971 left Bahrain with an extensive naval port. This became the Naval Force's base, known today as Mina Salman Naval Base.

The late 1970s also saw plans develop for acquiring naval vessels and command infrastructure. A Swiftships' 41ft LCU-390 landing craft (known as Ajeera-class) was ordered which arrived in 1982, and work started on a naval command centre. Due to a combination of the difficulty in suitable personnel, training limitations and equipment, the Naval Force's operational capabilities were severely limited well into the 1980s. It could only operate near Bahrain's coast, patrols were rarely more than four hours long and vessels only moved during daylight.

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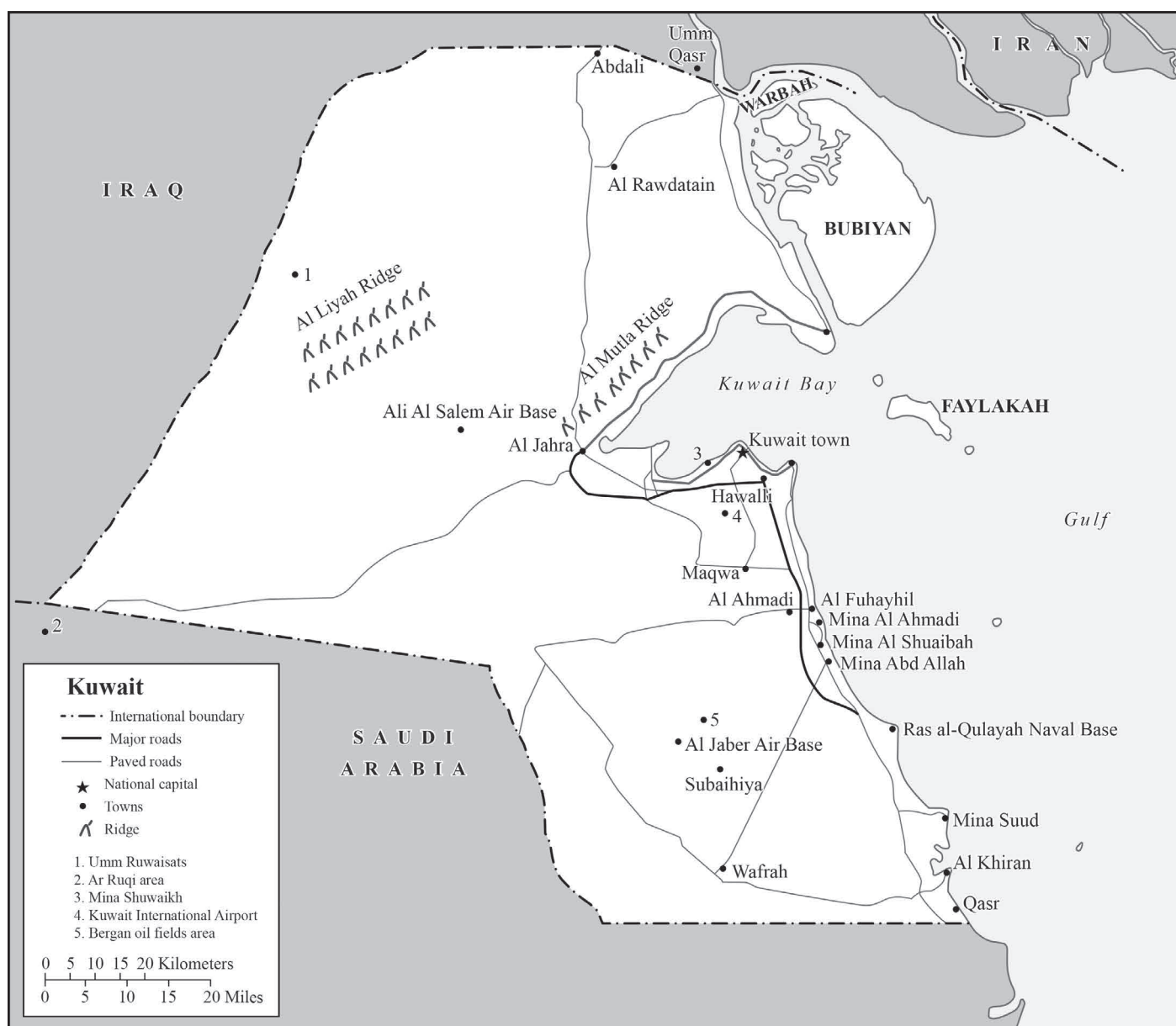
KUWAIT

The State of Kuwait is a small country that is wedged between two large states – Iraq to the north and west, and Saudi Arabia to the south. In addition, Iran neighbours it to the east. Due to its geographic position, Kuwait has long been open to attack or pressure

from its two adjoining countries, and by Iran after British influence in the Arabian Gulf ended in 1971.

Modern-day Kuwait is around 17,000km², making it slightly smaller than Slovenia and Fiji. Its population is likewise small; in 1918 it was some 65,000, in 1932 60,000 and in 1980 1.3 million. Its small size in terms of land and population compared to its neighbours meant that it would never have the strength by itself to defeat a determined aggressor.

Consequently, its security policy has always been defensive. It rested on two strategies – political diplomacy to secure political and military support from friendly states, and strengthening the country's internal security and military forces. Political diplomacy sought to maintain good relations with both Britain so that it would exercise its treaty commitments to aid Kuwait and key Arab states so that in times of need, they could assist in deterring attackers or assisting in the actual defence of Kuwait. As oil revenue increased, this diplomacy was augmented by financial contributions. This strategy explains why Kuwait has continually supported pan-Arabic and Islamic causes, supported groups and states with 'loans' or gifts, and joined military pacts such as the Unified Arab Command. Its second strategy of strengthening its forces was initially internally



Kuwait, 1980. (Map by Athol Yates)

Table 5: Rulers of Kuwait

Dates of reign	Ruler	Years of birth and death
5 February 1917 – 22 February 1921	Sheikh Salim Al Mubarak (I) Al Sabah (II) Al-Sabah, the 9th ruler of Kuwait	1864 – 1921
29 March 1921 – 29 January 1950	Sheikh Ahmad (I) Al Jaber (II) Al Mubarak (I) Al-Sabah, the 10th ruler of Kuwait	1885 – 1950
29 January 1950 – 24 November 1965	Sheikh Abdullah (III) Al Salim (I) Al Mubarak (I) Al-Sabah, the 11th ruler of Kuwait & the 1st Emir of the State of Kuwait	1895 – 1965
24 November 1965 – 31 December 1977	Sheikh Sabah (III) Al Salim (I) Al Mubarak (I) Al-Sabah, the 12th ruler of Kuwait	1913 – 1977
31 December 1977 – 15 January 2006	Sheikh Jaber (III) Al Ahmad (I) Al Jabir (II) Al-Sabah, the 13th ruler of Kuwait	1926 – 2006

focused as Britain was expected to protect Kuwait from external attack. Following growing military threats in the early 1960s and early 1970s, Kuwait's armed forces expanded considerably.

The history of Kuwait starts with the establishment in the early eighteenth century of Kuwait Town on the superb harbour known as Kuwait Bay. Its founders came from the Bani Utbah Arab tribal confederation. One of the Bani Utbah's principal divisions, the Al Sabah, stayed on in Kuwait with their descendants ruling to the present. The town rapidly became an important pearling, fishing and boat-building centre as well as a key entrepôt port for caravan trains travelling between the port and the province of Qasim, which is in the heart of the Nejd. To protect the town, a high mud wall was built around it by the late 1700s.

There were few permanent settlements outside of Kuwait Town due to region's very low rainfall and few sources of ground water. This remained the case until the influx of oil wealth in the 1940s which allowed large-scale desalination and deep groundwater drilling. The hinterland desert of Kuwait was the domain of the Bedu who moved with their flocks of goats and sheep and herds of camels in search of grazing. Most Bedu were part of the nomadic tribes of the northern regions of the Arabian Peninsula, with key tribes being the Mutair, Ajman, Shamar, Otaibah, Awazim and the Rashaïda.

The founder of modern Kuwait is regarded as Sheikh Mubarak (I) Al-Sabah (1886–1915), also known as Mubarak the Great. Kuwait's 1962 constitution states that the rulers of Kuwait must always be his descendants. Sheikh Mubarak (I) died at the start of the First World War and was succeeded by two of his sons, initially his oldest son, Jaber who died in 1917, and then Salim who died in 1921. These two sons created the two most important branches of the Al Sabah family (that is the Al Jaber and Al Salim branches) with their descendants being the only ones to hold the post of ruler to the present. The rulership has generally alternated between these two branches.

The end of the First World War saw Kuwait under complex colonial arrangements – it was technically under Ottoman suzerainty but had agreements with Britain. The Ottoman's control of Kuwait was nominally exercised through its Basra *vilayet* (i.e. administrative district) but in practice the *vilayet* took little interest in the town. To protect his autonomy, Sheikh Mubarak (I) signed an agreement with Britain in 1899 which committed him and his successors to not 'cede, sell, lease, mortgage or give for occupation or any other purpose any portion of his territory to the government or subjects of any power' without consent of Britain. In return he received a loose commitment from the British to protect Kuwait from external aggression. As was standard practice for Britain when it signed a protection treaty with a ruler in the Arabian Gulf, Britain appointed

a Political Agent to Kuwait with the first one arriving in 1904. The Political Agent generally avoided meddling in the internal affairs of the state, and instead limited himself to offering advice to the ruler, this being seen as the more enduring method of advancing British interests.

The modern-day borders of Kuwait have their origins in the Anglo-Ottoman Convention of 1913. This defined the borders between Kuwait, Nejd and Iraq, although they were not

ratified by the affected parties. In 1922, an agreement was signed between Ibn Saud (also known as Abdul Aziz, the future founder Saudi Arabia) and the British. The agreement excluded the ruler of Kuwait. It resulted in the borders between Nejd and Kuwait being slightly redefined, and a large neutral zone being created along the south-east of the Kuwait-Saudi border. The zone was divided into two in 1965, with each state absorbing its respective half. This last development created what are in effect Kuwait's modern-day borders. Today Kuwait has land borders of some 220km with Saudi Arabia and 250km with Iraq, plus a coastline of 500km.

Up to the end of the First World War, Kuwait was a prosperous and growing state. From then until 1930, its economy suffered due to Bedu raids and a blockage imposed by Ibn Saud. The raids were from Nejd tribes and to a lesser extent, Iraqi tribes. The Ikhwan, which were aligned with tribal groups mostly from the Nejd tribes, became the main raiders into Kuwait, particularly over the 1928 to 1930 period when the Ikhwan rebelled against Ibn Saud. In 1921 Ibn Saud prohibited caravans leaving Kuwait from entering his territory, as well as his tribes from going to Kuwait to buy supplies and trade. The immediate reason for this blockage was to punish Kuwait's ruler as he was benefiting 'unfairly' from customs revenue which Ibn Saud desperately needed. However, over time it became an element in Ibn Saud's strategy to bring the Kuwait ruler and his land under Ibn Saud's influence. The blockage, which lessened significantly in the late 1930s, formally ended in 1940. The blockade coupled with the collapse in the value of natural pearls plus the global depression of the early 1930s meant that the start of the 1930s was a time of great poverty in Kuwait.

The second half of the 1930s saw increased complaints from Kuwait's well-established families over the ruler's parsimony and inadequate attention given to Kuwait Town's public services such as health, education and finances. Fearing for his future, the ruler agreed in 1938 to the creation of an elected council which would have significant legislative and executive powers. Fourteen members of well-established families were elected to the council by the heads of 150 families. The council appointed heads (effectively ministers) for finance and defence, cut taxation and customs, and sought to purge corrupt officials from the police force. The council sought to stop illegal immigration, and undertake a census to determine the proportion of Kuwaiti 'nationals' and migrants. However, the reformers moved too fast and opposition to the plans grew from the ruler, vested interests who lost out in the reforms, and the broader population over the census's invasion of their privacy. Consequently, the ruler dissolved the council, and its members responding by shutting themselves up in Naif Fort with the police force. However

the ruler using Bedu supporters took control of the town and the council surrendered. The ruler imprisoned a number of the council members, and replaced the elected council with an advisory one which he controlled.

Kuwait's fortunes started to improve in 1935 when the ruler signed a 75-year concession agreement with newly formed Kuwait Oil Company, a company owned by British and US oil interests. In 1938, the first commercial oil discovery was made in the Burgan field to the south-east of Kuwait Town. A camp was constructed at nearby Maqwa. The outbreak of the Second World War saw oil development scale back to just drilling and then in 1942, all work stopped as all men and material were required for essential war work. The only remaining activity at Burgan was the mining of bitumen which was used in Iraq for the surfacing of roads.

The Second World War was a quiet period for Kuwait and it was not drawn into the conflict. While initially, there was some support for the Axis powers at the start of the war, this rapidly ended and the ruler and country supported or at the very least, did not hinder British and Allied efforts. Kuwait undertook some work for the Allies such as assembling barges for the US Inland Waterways Service needs in Iraq, and building dhows for a string of floating lookouts to be strung across the Gulf in order to warn of Japanese attacks.

The end of the war saw oil development resume and in 1946, exports of crude oil commenced. The ruler's income rose considerably and even further when other oil fields were discovered. With the increase in the ruler's revenue, the Political Agent encouraged him to improve his financial control and internal administration. While in other Gulf Arab states Britain encouraged the ruler to appoint a personal British advisor, this was not politically viable in Kuwait due to the increasing opprobrium associated with having such an advisor in Bahrain. Consequently, the Political Agent encouraged the ruler to appoint Britons as experts and heads of departments. While some were appointed (for example in 1951 Lieutenant Colonel (retired) G.C.L. Crichton for finance and Major General (retired) W.F. Hasted for engineering), the ruler turned mainly to Arab and Islamic states for expertise and senior administrators.

In the 1950s, it became obvious to the ruler that the existing government administration was inadequate to deal with the ever-growing complexity of the state and the scale of development. By the end of the decade, 10 government departments had been established. Their heads collectively formed Kuwait's Supreme Council which was, in effect, the cabinet of Kuwait. Initially there were no departments covering foreign affairs, defence and information but this changed following independence in 1961. Important security-related laws passed by the Supreme Council in the early 1960s included a penal code, and traffic and nationality laws.

The large and ever-growing oil income enabled the ruler to spend ever more on development and social support. This drove a massive construction and economic boom, and drew in huge numbers of foreigners. By 1960, Kuwait's population had grown to 320,000 of which about 50 percent were non-Kuwaitis. The foreigners were mostly northern Arabs from Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Palestine. To ensure Kuwaitis maintained control of government agencies, the highest posts were reserved for them. However, due to their lack of education and experience, it was common to have the position immediately below being held by non-Kuwaitis. Throughout Kuwaiti government agencies, northern Arabs provided the bulk of the needed technical, professional and managerial skill.

Kuwait's Hadr Bedu were encouraged by the state to settle. They mostly found employment in unskilled positions in the oilfields and security services. The 1959 Nationality Law, amended in 1960,

confirmed Kuwaiti citizenship to residents in Kuwait before 1920, and to their descendants in the male line and to foreign women upon marriage to Kuwaitis. Naturalisation was technically made possibly after 10 years for Arabs and 15 for non-Arabs although exceptions were made to Arabs who had lived in the country since 1945 and had performed outstanding service to the country. However, the numbers of naturalised citizenships was small due to concerns about the loss of dominance by Kuwaitis who held citizenship through law. It was rare for expatriates and even certain groups of Bedu to obtain Kuwaiti citizenship.

The rise of Nasser's anti-imperialistic, pan-Arabic message coupled with Britain's failed Suez operation saw rising anti-British sentiment in Kuwait. In 1956, oil company installations were severely damaged by sabotage, and crowds demonstrated. While the Kuwait government contained the situation, the country's leadership recognised that the support for Arab nationalism threatened their position if they were seen to be too close to the British. Consequently, in the 1950s Kuwait sought to move towards full independence, and create a perception of non-alignment. As Britain's primary interest was oil, London recognised that the best way to keep the oil flowing was to facilitate the creation of a friendly but independent Kuwait. On 19 June 1961, the 1899 agreement between Britain and the ruler of Kuwait was terminated. It was replaced with an Exchange of Notes which stated that Britain expressed its readiness to come to the assistance of Kuwait if requested. This potentially included Britain defending Kuwait if requested to do so, providing it was in Britain's interest.

The independence of Kuwait was seen by Iraq as an opportunity to reassert its claim over Kuwait – a claim which had been in abeyance between 1921 until 1958 when a coup led by the Brigadier General and nationalist Abd al-Karim Qasim overthrew the monarchy and created the Iraqi Republic. Six days after the cancellation of the 1899 agreement, Iraq asserted ownership over all of Kuwait. Fearing an invasion, on 30 June 1961 the Kuwaiti ruler asked for British assistance to defend his state. British forces deployed under the Operation Vantage plan, with the first troops of what was a large air, sea and land joint force landing on 1 July. An advance element of the Saudi Army arrived on 2 July.

Kuwait approached the Arab League to gain support for its independence and defence. In mid-August 1961, Kuwait had signed with it the Arab Mutual Defence and Economic Cooperation Pact, and negotiated an agreement for the League to establish the Arab Security Forces for the defence of Kuwait. By mid-August, soldiers from Saudi Arabia and subsequently the United Arab Republic (i.e. Egypt and Syria), Tunisia, Jordan and Sudan began to arrive. In late August there were about 1,800 Saudi troops deployed along Kuwait's border with Iraq, and Saudi forces would make up the bulk of the Arab Security Forces. By late September 1961, some 2,500 members of the Arab Security Forces had arrived, including armour and artillery. While numerically outnumbered by Iraq, the Arab League force acted as a deterrent as it was believed that the Iraqi leader did not want to commit to fighting other Arab troops, and because British forces could also come to the aid of the Arab force. The arrival of the Arab Security Forces allowed British troops to withdraw with all British combat elements having left by 10 October. Tensions with Iraq finally deescalated in October 1963 when Iraq recognised the full independence and sovereignty of Kuwait. However, this did not end the Iraqi-Kuwaiti hostility, nor the claim by pan-Arabists who wanted the oil of Kuwait to belong to the whole Arab community.

Pursuing a non-aligned position, Kuwait in 1963 became the first of the Gulf Arab states to establish diplomatic relations with Moscow.

Table 6: Kuwaiti Security Force Leadership	
The Kuwait Police/Directorate of Police, and the Directorate of Public Security (1936–1959)	
1936–42	Sheikh Ali Al Khalifa Al Abdullah Al-Sabah, Governor of Kuwait Town and Director of Public Security
1942–59	Sheikh Abdullah Al Mubarak (I) Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Directorate of Public Security
1942–59	Sheikh Sabah (III) Al Salim (I) Al Mubarak (I) Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Kuwait Police/Directorate of Police
1957–59	Sheikh Jabir (III) Al Ahmad (I) Al Jabir (III) Al-Sabah, Chairman of Public Security-Ahmadi (Ahmadi Force)
The Police and Public Security Department (1959–1961)	
1959–61	Sheikh Abdullah Al Mubarak (I) Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Police and Public Security Department
1959–61	Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah (III) Al Salim (I) Al-Sabah, Deputy Chairman and head of Kuwait Police
1959–61	Sheikh Mubarak Al Abdullah Al Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Chairman and head of Kuwait Army
1959–61	Colonel Abdul Latif Faisal Al Thuwaini, Director-General
Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Police and the Kuwait State Security Service (1961–1980)	
1962–78	Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah (III) Al Salim (I) Al-Sabah, Minister of Interior
1962–?	Major General Abdul Latif Faisal Al Thuwaini, Under-Secretary of the Ministry
1978	Sheikh Sabah (IV) Ahmad (I) Al Jaber (II) Al-Sabah, Minister of Interior
1978–86	Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad (I) Al Jaber (II) Al-Sabah, Minister of Interior
1967–80	Sheikh Mishal Al Ahmad (I) Al Jaber (II) Al-Sabah, head of Kuwait State Security Service
The Kuwait Army, Armed Forces and Ministry of Defence (1957–1980)	
1957–61	Sheikh Abdullah Al Mubarak (I) Al-Sabah, Commander-in-Chief of the Kuwait Army
1957–61	Sheikh Mubarak Al Abdullah Al Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Commander-in-Chief
1957–?	Lt Colonel Yacub Sultan Al Basari, Commanding Officer, Kuwait Army
1961–80	Major General Sheikh Mubarak Al Abdullah Al Jaber Al-Sabah, Chief of the General Staff
1962–64	Sheikh Mohammed Al Ahmad (I) Al Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Defence
1964–78	Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah (III) Al Salim (I) Al-Sabah, Minister of Defence
1978–88	Sheikh Salem Al Sabah (III) Al Salem (I) Al-Sabah, Minister of Defence
1980–?	Major General Abdullah Al Ghanim, Chief of the General Staff
The National Guard (1967–1980)	
1967–present	Sheikh Salim Al Ali Al Salim (I) Al-Sabah, Commander

In January 1968, Britain decided to end its treaties of protection of Bahrain, Qatar and the Trucial States. In May 1968, the ruler advised Britain that he would terminate the 1961 arrangements by the end of 1971. The ending of the arrangements would increase Kuwait's vulnerability, and to mitigate this risk, the state pursued increased diplomatic efforts and military force development.

Full independence for Kuwait in 1961 saw the political system become a constitutional monarchy based on the ruler being the head of state, a system of cabinet government, and a popular elected legislature known as the National Assembly. The 1965 election of the National Assembly saw 12 members elected who formed an Arab nationalist bloc. Their leftist, anti-monarchist and pan-Arab perspective was sometimes in opposition to that of Kuwait's government. Their impact was reduced following their loss of seats in the 1967 election but would increase in the mid-1970s leading to internal security concerns and a constitution crisis.

Kuwait held around 10 percent of the world's oil reserves, resulting in it becoming the richest country in the world during the 1960s as measured by national income per capita. The 1960s saw the number of expatriates continue to grow, particularly of Palestinians after the 1967 war. In 1970, expatriates now made up 53 percent of the 740,000 total population. During the 1950s and 1960s, expatriates were generally not seen as an internal security threat for they were pleased to reside in a prosperous state in contrast to their homeland. However, the late 1960s saw this perception change as radical Arab

expatriates in Kuwait increasingly undertook political agitation, criticised the state and organised public disturbances. Despite Kuwait's financial support for various Arab nationalist and leftist political and guerrilla movements, Kuwait experienced a number of terrorist attacks in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Of particular concern were Palestinian groups which committed bombings, aircraft hijacks and violent occupations in Kuwait in the early 1970s.

The 1975 election of the National Assembly saw around one third of the legislature joining an Arab nationalist bloc and this bloc challenged the Kuwait government's position on oil and social policies, the division of national wealth, and foreign policy related to the Palestinian cause. The ruling family came to see this bloc and more broadly, the anti-regime activities of Kuwait's large Palestinian element, as a serious threat to internal security and undermining its foreign policy. Consequently, in August 1976, the ruler dissolved the National Assembly, closed down opposition newspaper and ruled via a modified constitution. These arrangements would last until 1981, when elections were again undertaken for the National Assembly. In addition to ideological groups, another source of insecurity came from expatriates who had lived and worked for decades in Kuwait and were even born there. They resented not being able to obtain citizenship and the benefits this entitled them.

Unlike other Gulf Arab states, the Shia population did not pose an internal security risk. A generally accepted figure of some 15 to 20 percent of Kuwaitis were descended from Iranian Shia who settled

in Kuwait before 1920 and thus were entitled to citizenship. The Kuwaiti Shia, like other Kuwaitis, had benefited enormously from the state's extensive welfare program which included free medical care and education, and subsidised food, housing and utilities. Despite the considerable revolutionary propaganda directed at them from Iran and Shia conservatives, Kuwait's Shia community did not become hostile to Kuwait's leaders.

The late 1970s saw two geopolitical developments that threatened Kuwait's external security. These were the 1979 revolution in Iran and the efforts by Iran to export its revolution, and the Iraq-Iran war which threatened to spill over into Kuwait. Both of these initiated programs for developing the military forces as will be seen below.

1920 TO 1939, 'ORDINARY' TRIBAL THREATS, THE IKHWAN AND THE ORIGINS OF KUWAIT'S POLICE

By the late 1800s, Kuwait Town's prosperity gave the ruler considerable wealth and influence which extended well south and east of modern-day Kuwait, encompassing parts of contemporary Saudi Arabia. This area included the rangelands, watering places and camping grounds (known as the *dara*) of three powerful and large Bedu tribes – the Mutair, Ajman and Awazim. These Bedu gave fealty to the ruler of Kuwait and in return, the ruler gave them gifts of money and in-kind. Their loyalty provided Kuwait with protection from land attack as any attacker would first have to fight their way through these tribes' lands. Competition between the tribes, and between the tribes and neighbouring groups, including from Iraq, meant there were frequent 'ordinary' tribal raids. These were motivated by material gain such as capturing flocks and herds from other Bedu groups, and loot and food from settlements, caravans and others passing through. They were also undertaken for sport and prestige building.

Large-scale traditional tribal battles occasionally occurred and normally followed a standard pattern. They started with the cavalry coming to the front and seeking to provoke the enemy through sporadic shooting and displays of horsemanship. The camels and their riders, which inevitably formed the main body, remained in reserve. When the action had become serious, camels were made to kneel down, each becoming a kind of fieldwork for two riflemen under cover. The cavalry would then open out, and the firing began in earnest, until flank attacks or an excess of confidence on one side or the other brought on a general assault. Some assulters would fight on foot, and some mounted, and the melee would continue till one side gave way. The most common arms were Martini-Henry rifles or carbines, with ammunition carried in cartridge belts.

Kuwait's influence over regional tribes reduced in parallel to Ibn Saud's rising influence. By 1922, Ibn Saud was consolidating his territorial conquests over much of modern-day Saudi Arabia and Britain needed to negotiate with him to protect their interests in the Arabian Gulf. A conference was held in the town of Uqair, near Al Hasa, in December 1922 between Ibn Saud and the British, but excluding the ruler of Kuwait. This conference saw the border between Nejd and Kuwait pushed north-eastwards, resulting in Kuwait losing two-thirds of its territory. This included the *dara* of the three key Bedu tribes, and with it, the tribes' allegiance was transferred from the ruler of Kuwait to Ibn Saud.

While ordinary tribal raids continued in the 1920s, a far bigger threat to Kuwait was Ikhwan raiders. The Ikhwan were Ibn Saud's puritanical Wahhabi religious Bedu militia. The Ikhwan drew its strength from the Bedu tribes of the Nejd, including the Mutair and Ajman tribes. The Ikhwan was organised along tribal lines with paramount sheikhs becoming Ikhwan leaders. In the case

of the Mutair and Ajman, these were Faisal bin Sultan al-Dawish and Dhaydan bin Khalid bin Hizam bin Hithlain respectively. The Ikhwan was key to Ibn Saud's conquests in 1902 when he became the Amir of Nejd and Imam of the Wahhabis, and in 1914 when his forces took from the Ottoman Empire its coastal province of Hasa, and thus extending his control from Kuwait to modern-day Qatar. The Ikhwan willingly attacked Kuwaitis and other Arabs believing them not to be true Muslims.

To understand the threat from raiders and their countermeasures requires knowledge of Kuwait's geography and particularly, the location of its very limited water sources. This is because geography shaped both the routes taken by the aggressors, as well as the defenders' critical points of defence and types of forces which would be most effective.

Kuwait's desert had sparse vegetation which meant that Bedu needed to frequently move. In summer which lasts from May to September, the scarcity of water in the desert drove the Bedu to wells where they would camp. In the south of Kuwait, the main wells were at Wafra, Grain, Tawil and Subihyah. In the west, they were at Al Jahra which was Kuwait's only substantial agricultural area, and around Kuwait Town at Shamiyah and Dasma.

For a raiding force to sustain itself, it was essential that it had access to wells. For a large-scale attack on Kuwait Town, taking the wells at Al Jahra was essential. For the defenders, preventing Al Jahra from falling into the hands of the raiders had the benefits of depriving them of a sustainable base from which to launch an assault on Kuwait Town, as well as providing the defenders with an admirable position from which to launch attacks against the flanks and rear of raiders. As Al Jahra sits on the most direct route to Iraq, holding it would allow British land forces from Iraq to rapidly reach Kuwait Town. From the early 1920s, the nearest British forces were at Shaibah near Basra, and consisted of RAF armoured cars and aircraft. The armoured cars could reach Kuwait Town in a day. The terrain of Kuwait was mostly gravel which made it suitable for not only the raiders' horses and camels, but also wheeled transport and armoured cars. There were only a few areas in Kuwait which has soft sand and thus are extremely difficult for wheeled vehicles to traverse. This explains why Britain based its land force structure around armoured cars, and the ruler built up his mobile force in the late 1920s around motor vehicles.

Before the motorisation of the ruler's forces, the ruler had two standing groups which he could use to provide security both inside and outside of Kuwait Town. These would be bolstered during times of threat by two forms of levies. One standing group was the *khudam*, meaning servants. These were the ruler's personal bodyguards and hawkers, and in 1920, numbered some 30. They would enforce the ruler's and judges' decisions and investigated quarrels or troubles among the Bedu. A detached group of the ruler's bodyguard *khudam* worked under the town's governor, serving as 'constables' and guards, with the latter being watchmen tasked with guarding a building or location like a *souq* (market). None wore uniforms nor badges, and only some were armed. To protect the town, the ruler could call up a levy of townsmen. These merchants, shopkeepers and labourers supplied their own arms or were supplied by the ruler from his armoury in the Naif Fort. In 1930, the townsmen levy could raise up to 5,000 armed men. This levy could not be used outside the town.

The second standing group were the *fidawiya*, meaning devotees. These were Bedu paid by the ruler who had their headquarters in Al Jahra. In 1930, they numbered around 300. The *fidawiya*'s purpose was to protect the ruling family's camels, horses and sheep.

In winter, they would move with their charges about the grazing grounds between Al Jahra and the Batin (some 90km south-west of the Kuwait border), and in summer, be based at the Al Jahra wells. They were a mixture of the region's key tribal groups plus others such as Rashaida. In times of trouble such as dealing with small raiding parties, the ruler would call on the *fidawiya*. Their role was not to guard the frontier. The *fidawiya* could be augmented by the *araidar*. The *araidar* were semi-nomadic Bedu who in winter roamed around Kuwait state with their camels and sheep more or less staying close to the *fidawiya* for protection. In summer the *araidar* would leave their livestock with the *fidawiya* at Al Jahra with the men engaging in pearl diving, and the women and children setting up tents around the walls of the town and near the various wells in the vicinity. The number of *araidar* in 1930 was 700.

Kuwait was on the route for both Saudi and Iraqi Bedu groups as they moved across the region with their flocks in search of grazing. In terms of social hierarchy, Bedu who claimed desert origin saw themselves as superior to the *araidar*, and fully settled Bedu, known as Hadr Bedu. The hierarchy was reinforced by economic wealth and livestock. Bedu who raised camels were wealthier than those who raised sheep and goats. As camels could survive desert conditions and travel long distances, these Bedu were fully nomadic. Conversely Bedu raising sheep and goats lived closer to settlements and were less nomadic. The Bedu hierarchy has long played a part in the 'aristocratic' Bedu rationalising their attacks on 'inferior' groups – this attitude underpinned the violent attacks by the Bedu Ikhwan tribes on other Bedu and settled Arabs.

In 1920, Ibn Saud sought to exercise his claim over Kuwait and instructed a head of a section of the Mutair tribe to build houses and settle with his followers at Jariyah, 100 miles south of Kuwait. Given that it was unusual for a tribe to camp in that area at that time of the year, the ruler sent an emissary to investigate. On 18 May 1920, this party was attacked at Hamdh, 15 miles east of Jariyah by a Mutair Ikhwan group. The ruler's party was routed and suffered high casualties.

Fearing further attacks from the Ikhwan, the ruler ordered the immediate construction of a wall around Kuwait Town. However, rather than rebuilding the existing one which had fallen into disrepair and now enclosed only a part of the much larger Kuwait Town, a new one was built which encompassed all of the town plus an open area of over one square mile. The new wall was some four miles long, had three main gates which were surmounted by towers, and had additional towers at roughly 200m intervals along its length. The enclosed open area enabled friendly Bedu with their livestock to obtain protection from raiders inside the wall. The wall, which was completed in early October 1920, had several weaknesses. One was that it would not withstand artillery, another that while it extended to the foreshore, it did not extend out to a point where it was impassable at low tide. An additional weakness was that the land in front of the south-east wall had not been levelled and cleared, thus providing cover for approaching forces. Finally, the wall's loopholes were badly constructed and provided very limited fields of fire, and there were no fire steps on the inside of the wall from which to shoot.

On 7 October 1920, between 3,000 and 4,000 horse and camel-mounted mainly Mutair Ikhwan under al-Dawish was reported to have left Wafrah for Subaihiyah, with the expectation that they would attack Kuwait Town. At that time, the ruler was in Al Jahra and hearing of the Ikhwan's movement ordered the defence of Al Jahra and the wall of Kuwait Town to be manned. Rather than directly attacking Kuwait Town, on 10 October the Ikhwan attacked the ruler's static and mounted forces at Al Jahra. The ruler's forces

were rapidly routed with the ruler retreating with about 600 men to the Al Jahra fort. Over the next day the Ikhwan made three determined attacks on the fort, all of which failed. Meanwhile a relief force from Kuwait Town was being assembled by Sheikh Ahmad (I) Al Jabir (II) Al-Sabah (the ruler of Kuwait from 1921), who was then charged with the defence of Kuwait Town. The force was made up of some 600 men. These were sent via the ruler's steam launch plus a few sailing boats. In addition, mounted Bedu were also coming overland.

Before the relief force arrived, the Ikhwan retired, reaching Subaihiyah on 12 October, and then across the border. While the Kuwaiti casualties were comparatively light at about 200 dead, the Ikhwan lost possibly 800 dead during the attack due to their fanatical disregard for their own safety. In addition, some 400 died from their wounds enroute to Subaihiyah, and around a 100 more subsequently.

The British did not militarily intervene during the attack as its policy was that it would only do so if there were direct threats against Kuwait Town, British interests and the safety of British subjects. However, as per the agreement of 1899, if requested by the ruler, Britain would consider providing assistance. Britain did however station several Royal Navy and Royal Indian Marine vessels off Kuwait Town during October, and fly aircraft from the RAF squadron at Shaibah over the Ikhwan dropping leaflets stating its policy. These and/or the relief force may have deterred the Ikhwan from attacking the town and deciding to withdraw.

Between 1920 and 1927, Ikhwan raids into Kuwait, as well as 'ordinary' raids, occurred occasionally, but at a relatively small scale. This level reflected both Ibn Saud forbidding the Ikhwan from raiding Kuwait and Britain's application of the aerial control doctrine. Aerial control involved the use of aircraft to intimidate populations in undeveloped areas so they followed British administrators' aims. The doctrine's overarching principle was control without occupation, thus removing the necessity of having British Army garrisons and the use of punitive columns as was common across Britain's colonial frontiers. Aerial control depended on having on-the-ground British political representatives and RAF Special Service Officers. The latter spoke the local languages, travelled continuously in their allocated regions which enabled them to understand the local conditions, and served as a conduit between local leaders and the British political representative including informing the leaders what was required of them and their community (such as paying taxes or halting raids), and the consequences of not doing so. Providing the intimidation was the RAF's aircraft and its land forces, notably its levies and Armoured Car Companies.

If a local community failed to do as required by the British, the RAF would start by providing them with a warning, commonly in the form of air-dropped leaflets. If it continued to not comply, intimidation efforts would include slow and low formations of aircraft flying, and the dropping of flares, practice bombs and smoke bombs. If they still failed to comply, they would be informed what would be targeted and when to evacuate. The targets would then be bombed or staffed. Although no RAF unit was ever based in Kuwait, RAF units from Iraq could deploy rapidly to Kuwait. The closest RAF bases in Iraq were at Shaibah and Basra, which from the early 1920s was home to aircraft and after 3 November 1922, to armoured cars.

Between 1927 and 1930, sections of the Ikhwan rebelled against Ibn Saud. They believed he had failed to stand up to Britain and Iraq, and to protect the Bedu's traditional way of life. Dissatisfaction came to a head in 1927 when Iraq started building a handful of

police posts along its southern borders with Saudi Arabia which was seen as a threat to the Bedu's nomadic ways. After attacking the killing all but one Iraq policeman at the Busaiya post in November 1927, the Ikhwan under al-Dawish's control openly defied Ibn Saud's instructions to not raid Kuwait. That month Kuwaiti Bedu were attacked at Umm Rimmam north of Al Jahra. Fearing further attacks, Kuwait Town's wall was rapidly repaired and manned during the night, with the Al Jahra garrison also strengthened to 300 men.

In January 1928, raiders attacked Kuwaiti Bedu at Umm Ruwaisat some 38 miles north-west of Al Jahra, killing three and carrying off considerable numbers of camels and sheep. Hearing of it, the ruler assembled a response force. Rather than having this force mounted on horses and camels, he commandeered some 25 motor vehicles in Kuwait Town, and with up to nine men per car, drove to the Ar Ruqi area in the hope of cutting off the raider's retreat. Crossing rough country with no roads, around 15 vehicles arrived to intercept the raiders. The ensuing battle saw the Kuwaitis resoundingly defeat the raiders, killing over 35 of them with the loss of 11, and capturing most of the booty. The RAF subsequently located the fleeing raiders and dropped bombs and strafed them.

Fearing a large-scale attack on Kuwait Town, in February 1928 the British stationed three naval vessels off Kuwait Town and sent ashore landing parties to protect British assets. The landing parties were organised into sections to man towers and gateways while some 3,000 Kuwaitis were organised to man the walls. One of the vessels was the light cruiser HMS *Emerald* which performed an extremely useful wireless telegraphy link to the British armoured car force in Kuwait's interior. Other vessels were the sloops HMS *Lupin* and HMS *Crocus*. The ships were anchored where they had enfilading arcs of fire from both ends of the town. A Quick Firing 2 Pounder Maxim gun made by Vickers was mounted on the Kuwait Town wall and maned by Royal Marines. A temporary air base was also established just outside the walls of the town and a flight of aircraft and two sections of armoured cars arrived from Shaibah. These armoured cars plus four armed Fords of the ruler undertook a four-day reconnaissance to the south-west of Kuwait in March 1928.

Despite the presence of British forces, raids continued. For example in March 1929, some 600 raiders attacked a camp of Iraqi shepherds just seven miles from Kuwait Town. The shepherds lost 37 men and over 6,000 sheep and 650 donkeys. Despite being pursued subsequently by the RAF, the raiders escaped with all of their loot.

The threat increased in June 1929 when a large rebel Ikhwan force moved to Jariya Illya, 80km south of Kuwait. This location gave them options of attacking in different directions. At this point, the rebels made an offer to the ruler of Kuwait to join them, and in doing so, help to overthrow Ibn Saud and regain the land lost to him in 1923. The ruler declined, despite his family's historic connections with the rebel tribes and desire to regain territory. On 30 August, the rebels crossed Kuwait's southern borders, driven by the necessity of finding fresh grazing grounds for the vast herds of their own and looted camels and sheep. At least 5,000 fighting men plus thousands of women and children, 3,000 tents and 100,000 camels settled around Subaihiyeh and the wells. An ultimatum was sent for them to leave Kuwait or face punishment. Despite Britain's lack of willingness to attack the raiders for fear of harming women and children, the rebel forces did withdraw southwards.

The rebel Ikhwan wanted to engage Ibn Saud's forces in battle but to do this, he needed to leave their women, children and animals. Around 31 October 1929, al-Dawish arrived near Al Jahra and asked the ruler and Political Agent to provide this protection. The request was refused, and as he could not leave them without protection, he

recognised that he was trapped. It appears this realisation was the point when al-Dawish lost heart for the fight. Al-Dawish started to advise his fellow rebels to seek a reconciliation with Ibn Saud. The rebel forces started to dwindle, and by December 1929 was much reduced. By this time, the remaining Ikhwan with their non-combatants and animals were concentrated in the Nejd near the border with Kuwait. The RAF armoured cars had moved to the Ar Ruqi area in order to prevent the rebels from crossing back into Kuwait or Iraq. Ibn Saud's forces were also closing in, and recognising that their best hope was sanctuary and a negotiated surrender in Kuwait, the rebels set out for Al Jahra. They crossed the Kuwait border undetected around 6 January 1930 with RAF planes and armoured cars catching up with them some 10 miles west of Al Jahra. They were harassed to some degree but most arrived at Al Jahra. By this time, Ibn Saud's forces were concentrated on the southern frontier where they were waiting to annihilate the Ikhwan remnants when they were expelled from Kuwait.

Rather than expelling them, on 9 January the Political Agent got the leaders of the rebel Ikhwan to surrender to the armoured car column. The Ikhwan's leaders were flown out to Basrah with the remnants of the Mutair and the Ajman tribes remaining in the Al Jahra region under guard. Despite this, the tribes suffered from revenge attacks by those who had suffered the predations by the Ikhwan. Negotiations between the British and Ibn Saud resulted in an agreement where the rebels would be handed over to Ibn Saud and in return he would spare the lives of the rebel leaders and their followers, and would also prevent further raids by the Mutair, Ajman and other Nejd tribes on both Kuwait and Iraq. The British handed the rebel leaders over to Ibn Saud in late January 1931 who sentenced them to life imprisonment. Faisal al-Dawish died in prison on 3 October 1931. The rebels detained by the RAF in the Al Jahra area were handed over to Ibn Saud by early February 1931, where their loot was confiscated plus their riding camels, horses and mares.

The 1928 Ikhwan raids and Britain's response formalised Britain's policy on assisting Kuwait. This was laid out by the Air Officer Commanding, Iraq Command, and consisted of Britain only coming to the aid of Kuwait if it was in danger of a serious attack by strong forces. Responsibility for dealing with ordinary tribal raids, both large and small, rested with the ruler. These arrangements would determine Kuwait's force structure for the next two decades, as it meant that the ruler concentrated on internal security with the British responsible for external security.

The Armed Car Force

The British recommended to the ruler that he should establish an armed car force of 12 Ford Vannettes armed with Lewis guns mounted on tripods. For communications, two wireless sets should be mounted in lorries as per the RAF Armoured Car Reserve force. To provide leadership and training, a former British officer or NCO should be engaged. However due to limited funds and other reasons, the force the ruler built in 1929 consisted of four Ford Vanettes (probably Ford Model A) plus one Chevrolet, each mounting a Lewis gun, plus one Ford or Chevrolet lorry mounting a Vickers gun. He also placed one additional Lewis and one Vickers gun in his armoury. He did not agree to engage a contracted British soldier, nor buy the wireless sets. The armed cars could be augmented in an emergency by the ruler commandeering taxis, private cars and light trucks in Kuwait, of which there were some 50 in 1930. At this time, the ruler's armoury consisted of around 4,500 Turkish and

BAHRAIN

Bahrain Police



Large headdress badge, brass issued 1939



1960 cap badge



1970 cap badge



Public Security Force cap badge



Police Force white metal belt buckle



State Police epaulettes



MOI and Public Security



State Police Lance Corporal rank



Public Security Police



Police shoulder title 1970s

Bahrain Army, Emiri Guard, Navy and National Guard



Defence Force headdress badge, original



Land Force belt buckle, brass



Defence Force Major rank badge



Royal Guard cap and collar badges



Parachutist wings, early type



National Guard headdress badge

Shoulder titles of Bahrain Military Forces and Police Force



Defence Force shoulder title, 1971



Army shoulder title, early type



Royal Guard shoulder title



Defence Force parade dress title



Bahrain Defence Force



Bahrain Defence Force



Police, 1960-1970s



Bahrain

Bahrain



1 Battalion



15 Battalion



Transport



Infantry



EME



Music



Signals



Engineers



Air Defence Bn



Medical



Quartermaster



Parachute
Commandos



Royal College*



Special Forces



Unknown



Unknown



Armoured Bn



Tank Bn



Tank Bn



Royal Bahrain Navy



Royal Military Police



Bahrain Artillery patch
Military Police brassard



Arbitrator brassard



Military Security brassard



Unknown



BDF Navy Police



1 Infantry brassard



Sniper brassard



Royal Bahrain Navy

*Title reads "Al Kuliya Al Malikiya Lil Qiyada wa al Arkan" meaning "Royal College for Leadership and Staff"

Bahrain



Early Signals



Bahrain Amiri Air Force
Helicopter Wing patch



Royal Air Wing



Unknown



Unknown



Engineers Bomb Disposal

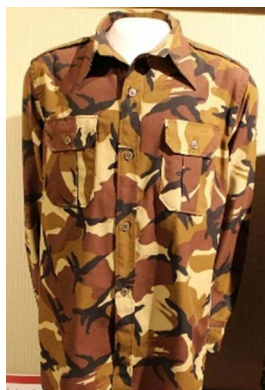


Thunder Bolt

Bahrain camouflage uniforms worn approximately during the following years. (Bahrain Military Museum)



1970 (first issue)
winter jacket SF



1970s



1980s winter combat



1990s work jacket



2000-2014



Oerlikon twin-barrelled 35mm Skyguard AAA system. (Bahrain Military Museum)



Two single-seat F-5Es and a F-5E two-seater (centre) of the Bahrain Emiri Air Force, seen shortly after their delivery in 1987. (Tom Cooper collection)

KUWAIT

Police



Police and Public Security pre 1961



Cap badge pre 1961



Police and Public Security pre 1961



Headdress badge pre-independence



Cap badge post 1961



Cap badge post-independence



Collar badge Officer Cadets College



Police shoulder title ca 1939



Public Police Force shoulder title



Police and Public Security



Market Guard 1940-1960



Button post-1961



Breast badge Police No. 145



Breast badge Police No. 185



Belt buckle

Army, National Guard and Air Force



Army headdress brass post-1953



National Guard badge 1st type



National Guard new 1967



Army badge officers 1960



Army badge enlisted and NCOs



Army belt buckle bronze



Land Force, Air Force, Navy, also non-voiced. Small collars identical



Parachutist wings, early variety



Parachutist wings



Air Force wings old, brass



Air Force wings old cloth



Air Force wings, more modern cloth

Kuwait (continued)



1 Armoured Bn



5 Infantry Bn



15 Signals



18 Music



Artillery



48 Army Aviation



57 Mec Inf



60 Transport Bn



Missiles



Anti-Aircraft



Ordnance



Inf School



52 Military Police



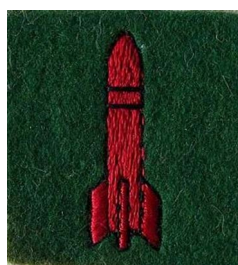
EME



Naval Technician



10 National Guard



TOW Anti-Tank



Infantry



13 Missile Regt



Transport



Tech Engineer



Air Force



Adjutant General



Futuwwa (chivalry)



Quartermaster

Kuwait (continued)



39 Reserve Battalion



Combat Assault



Commandos



Armour



15 Brigade



HQ



Navy



Emiri Guard



Armoured Military College



3 Bn Transport



Infantry School Inst.



Infantry



Police School NCOs



Traffic Police



Public Security Force



Egyptian Camouflage worn by Commandos in 1961. (Eric H. Larson)



25-pounder guns of the Kuwait Army seen in the 1980s. (Authors' collection)



Centurion main battle tanks and a Ferret armoured car of the Kuwait Army, seen in the 1970s. (Authors' collection)



A pair of Hunter fighter-bombers of the Kuwait Air Force. (Tom Cooper collection)



A Mirage F.1CK interceptor of the Kuwait Air Force, seen in March 1989. (Jean-Marie Lipka collection)



One of two Lightning T.Mk 55 two-seat conversion trainers of the Kuwait Air Force. (Albert Grandolini collection)



A DHC-4 Caribou medium transport of the Kuwait Air Force. (Tom Cooper collection)

QATAR

(Cliff Lord and Eddie Parks)

Police



Security Forces brass, 1960s



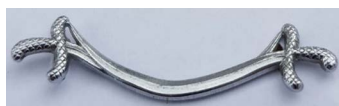
Security forces large pearl shell badge 1949-1950s



Police cap badge 1970s



Cap badge with new national emblem 1980



Police shoulder title



Police shoulder title mid-1980s



Police Major rank insignia



Police metal belt buckle



Land Forces arm patch 1st type



Land Forces arm patch 2nd type from 1976



Hamad Armoured Regiment from 1970s-1980



Army cloth patch



Emiri Guard Squadron cloth patch



Warrant Officer 2nd class



Warrant Officer 2nd class (parade)



Naval headdress badge



Land Forces cap badge



Army shoulder title 1st type



Land Forces shoulder title



Land Forces Major rank



Army belt buckle



After acquiring its first armoured vehicles in 1971, a year later Bahrain acquired eight Saladin armoured cars. Combined with Shorlands and Ferrets to form an independent armoured car company, they remained the most powerful ground vehicles of the force for years, until supplanted by French-made AML-90s. Bahraini Saladins were camouflaged in dark sand and chocolate brown, and not known to have worn any kind of other insignia. (Artwork by David Bocquelet)



Kuwait was an early recipient of Centurion Mk 3 main battle tanks: it acquired 16 in 1959. This number had increased to 24 by the mid-1960s, and more than 40 by the early 1970s, by when the fleet was re-armed with the L7 105mm main gun and reinforced with six Centurion Armoured Recovery Vehicles. For most of the 1970s, they served with the 7th Armoured Regiment of the 35th Armoured Brigade in the livery depicted here, consisting of dark green overall, with a wavy camouflage pattern in dark sand. Inset is shown the application of the 7th Armoured Regiment's tactical insignia on the left front fender. (Artwork by David Bocquelet)



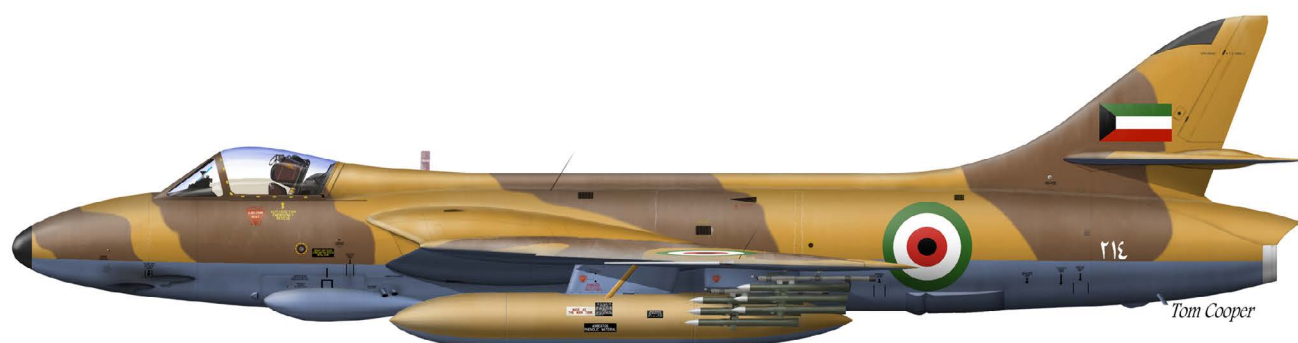
For decades, Qatar was the weakest-armed Arab state in the Gulf, and the development of its armed forces lagged well behind that of its neighbours. In 1960, the country received four Saracen armoured personnel carriers and four Saladin armoured cars, with the latter replacing its ageing four Daimler armoured cars. As far as is known, for most of the 1970s, Qatari Saracens were all painted in dark sand overall, and wore the tactical insignia of the Hamad Armoured Regiment on the left forward portion of the superstructure. (Artwork by David Bocquelet)



After purchasing two Westland Scout H.Mk 1 Srs. 4 for its police, in 1965, Bahrain took more than 10 years to reinforce its defence forces: in 1977, the newly established Bahrain Amiri Air Force acquired two MBB Bo.105C helicopters, followed by a third, a year later. Home-based at Bahrain International, they were primarily deployed for liaison and communication, but also for training and observation, and operated in parallel with Bahrain Public Security's Bell 205As and Hughes 269Cs, and two other Hughes 269s of the State Police. All three Bo.105s of the Bahrain Amiri Air Force were painted in dark sand overall, wore roundels on the sides of the cabin, and fin flashes. The only known serial is 1063 shown here. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



Established in 1961 with British assistance, the Kuwait Air Force initially acquired six BAC Jet Provost T.Mk 51 armed trainers. These were maintained and flown by British personnel while those of the Kuwait Air Force underwent training in the UK. Throughout their service, the Kuwait Air Force's Jet Provosts retained their high-speed silver overall finish: rather unusually, they had their noses painted in black. In the 1970s, most had their fins painted in dark blue. Three-digit serials – originally applied in black on the rear fuselage, and (RAF-style) on undersurfaces of the wing – were retained throughout their careers, but those in Arabic digits were eventually moved up to the fin, and applied together with the service title, as shown inset. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



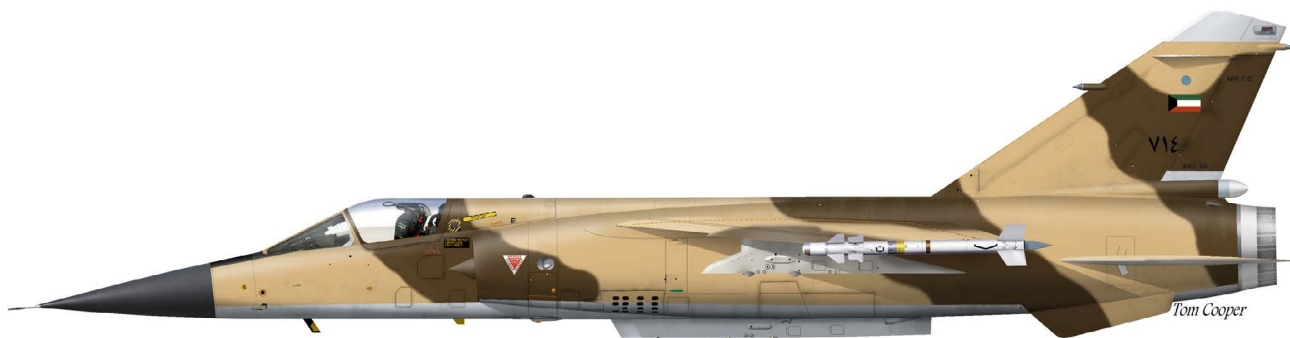
In 1964, Kuwait followed the acquisition of Jet Provosts with the purchase of four refurbished Hawker Hunter F.Mk 57s, and two, two-seat Hunter T.Mk 67s. Despite the order for much more powerful BAC Lightnings, by 1967, the flight operating Hunters was expanded to a total of 11 aircraft. Right from the start, Kuwaiti Hunters wore a livery in middle stone (BS381C/362) and dark brown (BS381C/450) on upper surfaces and sides (applied following a standardised camouflage pattern): undersides were originally left in high-speed silver finish, but by the early 1970s painted in azure blue (BS381C/104). Serials in the range 201 to 214 were always applied in white, in the usual position on the rear fuselage, and sometimes accompanied with single-letter codes, high on the fin. This example is shown as armed with Sura unguided 68mm rockets. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



In 1964, as a part of a complex scheme aimed at securing financing for the (stillborn) acquisition of the General Dynamics F-111K for the RAF, London convinced Kuwait City and Riyadh to place an order for BAC Lightning interceptors. Kuwait opted to have these modified for fighter-bomber purposes, including the capability to carry pods for unguided rockets on large hardpoints atop their wings, as the F.Mk 53 variant. Twelve of the latter were acquired, together with two Lightning T.Mk 55 conversion trainers. Powerful, but relatively short-ranged, the type was ideal for the task, but proved much too complex to maintain and operate by Kuwaiti Air Force crews: in 1973, the situation reached a point where Egypt offered to acquire the entire fleet. As usual for the time, Kuwaiti Lightnings were left in their bare metal overall livery, bar for the 'anti-glare' panel in black, on the forward fuselage. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



To improve training of new pilots and ground crews, and prepare them for conversion to Lightnings, in 1964 Kuwait also placed an order for 12 BAC Strikemaster T.Mk 83s. They proved highly popular in service and, together with Hunters, formed the backbone of the Kuwait Air Force well into the 1970s. Unlike the Lightnings, Kuwaiti Strikemasters received a camouflage pattern in light stone (BS381C/361) and dark brown (BS381C/450) on top surfaces and sides, and azure blue (BS381C/104) on undersides. Serials were applied in white on the rear fuselage, and usually accompanied with construction numbers (K167-115 in this case) applied in white below the horizontal fin, and a single-letter code on the fin. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



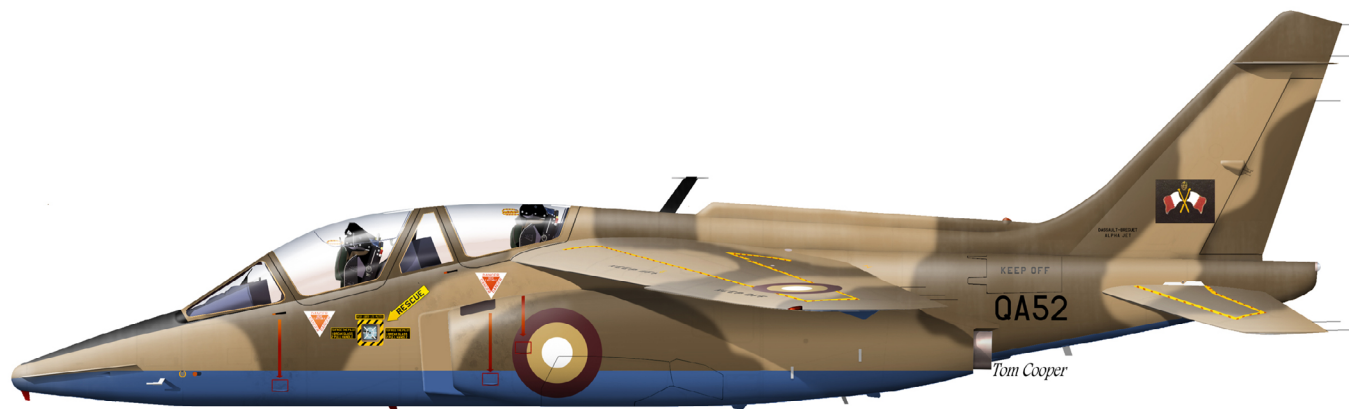
Following border clashes with Iraq in March 1973, Kuwait was in a hurry to replace the problematic Lightnings with a new interceptor. Fierce competition between several corporations from the USA and France led to Kuwait becoming the launching customer for the then brand-new Dassault Mirage F.1C in April 1974, resulting in an order for 18 F.1CK interceptors (serials 701 to 718, and armed with Matra 530 and internal 30mm DEFA guns) and two F.1BK two-seat conversion trainers (serials 771 and 772). In the 1980s, their armament was bolstered through the acquisition of Matra Super 530s and R.550 Magics, the latter of which are shown installed on the wingtip station. Delivered in 1977, this example – serial 714 – was one of at least two written off during the Iraqi invasion of August 1990, when Kuwaiti Mirage F.1CK pilots claimed a number of kills against enemy helicopters. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



Established in 1968, the air wing of the Public Security Service of Qatar was initially equipped with two Westland Whirlwind Series 3 helicopters. Maintained and flown by seconded RAF personnel, the two Whirlwinds received this unique livery in the country's national colours on top surfaces, and dark sand on sides and undersurfaces. The service title was applied low on the forward fuselage. Initially, the roundel was accompanied by a transfer code in black (for example: G-17-1), later replaced by a serial (11 in the case shown here), while the fin was decorated with the national flag of Qatar. At least one example is known to have been equipped with large floats for a while. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



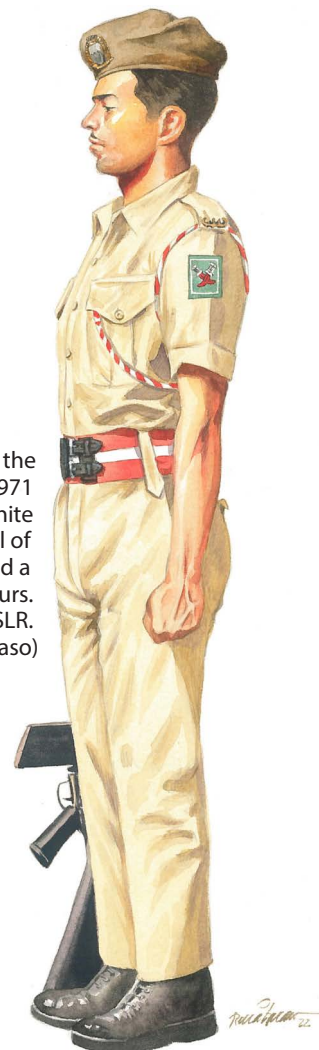
In 1970, the government in Doha announced the intention to acquire a combat capability in the form of 12 Hawker Hunters. This proved overambitious and in 1971 Qatar placed an order for three refurbished Hunter F.Mk 78s single-seaters, and one T.Mk 79 two-seat conversion trainer. The delivery took place in December of the same year, and all the four jets were initially flown and maintained by seconded RAF personnel. Qatari Hunters received the same livery in middle stone, dark brown and azure blue as Kuwaiti and Saudi examples before them, but their serials were applied in black, and included the prefix QA. Rarely carrying any external stores other than drop tanks, they usually patrolled the lengthy coasts of Qatar. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



After establishing the Qatar Emiri Air Force in 1974, Doha embarked on expanding the service through the acquisition of additional helicopters. By 1979, increasing oil revenues enabled it to place an order for six Dassault-Dornier Alpha Jet 1E jet trainers and light strikers, the first three of which were delivered in October 1980 to serve with No. 11 Squadron. Heavily tasked with training, the Qatar Emiri Air Force Alpha Jet fleet was reinforced through the acquisition of additional examples in the 1990s, and remain in service at the time of writing. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)

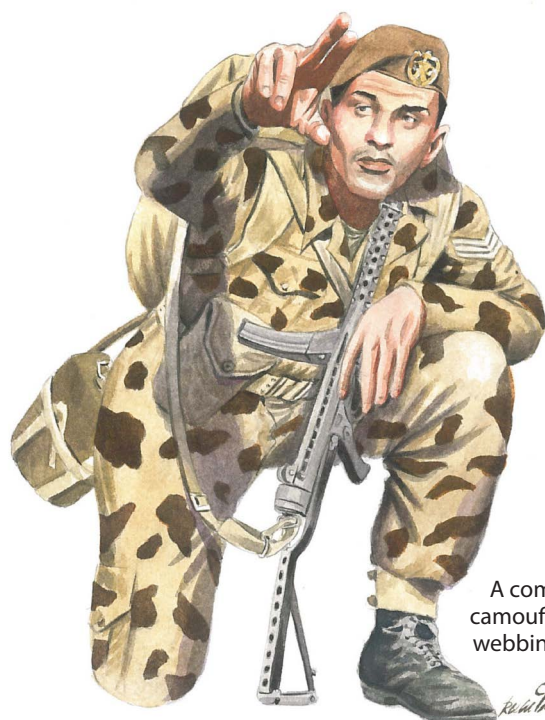


A sergeant of the Bahrain Police in the 1970s: the red piping of his shoulder boards has been turned orange by exposure to the sun. (Artwork by Renato Dalmaso)



This infantry soldier of the Bahrain Defence Forces in 1971 is shown with the red and white stable belt – as worn by all of Bahrain's armed forces – and a lanyard in the national colours. His firearm was the 7.62mm SLR. (Artwork by Renato Dalmaso)

This Qatari infantry soldier of the early 1970s is shown with the SLR at the shoulder arms – the method previously used with the Enfield rifle, rather than holding the pistol grip. (Artwork by Renato Dalmaso)



A commando of the Kuwait Army in 1961. His camouflage uniform is in an Egyptian style and the webbing of the British 1937 Pattern. His firearm is a 9mm Sterling sub machine gun. (Artwork by Renato Dalmaso)



A map of the north-western Gulf, with Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar, and air bases in service as of 1980 (marked in blue). Major air bases constructed since are marked in green. (Map by George Anderson)

German Mausers and British .303 rifles with a plentiful supply of ammunition, plus the machine guns.

The introduction of the ruler's armed Ford/Chevrolet armed car force meant that on the report of a raid or an incident, cars could race out to the scene, deal with it and return all in the matter of one day. This greatly enhanced internal security, and coupled with the regular presence of RAF aircraft over Kuwait due to the frequently flights between Kuwait and Bahrain, plus improved control over Nejd Bedu and Iraqi shepherding tribes by their respective governments, there were fewer raids in Kuwait.

The Origins of Kuwait's Police

The origin of Kuwait's police dates to the early 1930s when four policing groups came into existence. These were not formal governmental departments with defined roles. As a consequence, there was overlap in their roles, and their effectiveness and the vigour which they pursued their activities reflected the degree to which their heads oversaw and motivated their group. Each group was headed by one of the ruler's cousins.

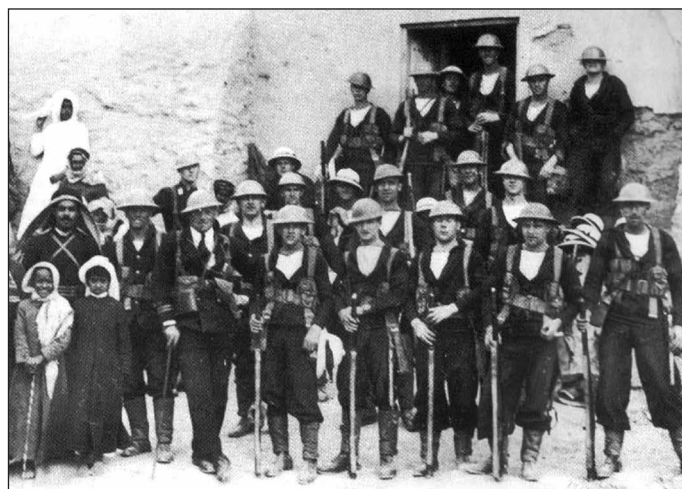
The four groups were the Police Department, the Municipality Guards, the Public Security Department, and the Court Police. The Police Department was headed by Sheikh Sabah (III) Al Salim (I) Al Mubarak (I) Al-Sabah and managed by Ghanim Sagar Al Ghanim, and its role was to maintain security in the town. Most of its members were Bedu. The Municipality Guards was headed by Sheikh Sabah bin Duajh Al-Sabah, and their role was to patrol the town and provide night watchmen to guard the markets. The patrols were made up of Bedu and the night watchmen were Persian Baluchi. The Public Security Department was headed by Sheikh Ali bin Khalifa bin Abdullah Al-Sabah, and supported by Sheikh Ali bin Khalifa bin Abdullah Al-Sabah, and Abdullah Al Ahmad Al-Sabah as of the late 1930s. Its role was to patrol the borders of Kuwait using the armed car force. It would establish police posts along its borders and modelled itself on that of the Iraqi police system. The Court Police was headed by Abdallah Al Jabir Al-Sabah, and its role was the execution of judicial judgements and receiving compensation or restitution for the victims of crime. Its personnel consisted of Kuwaiti judges and Bedu enforcers. Cases of petty crime were taken before the head of the Municipality Guards or Police Department, with all others before the Court Police.

The police and security departments were mostly manned by *khudam* and *fidawiya*, but as the population of Kuwait Town rose in the 1930s and more personnel were needed, other groups including Nejd Bedu and Persians were also hired. The overlapping role of the four departments caused disharmony between the groups, a lack of control over them, and corruption and poor behaviour. This led to the town's notables calling for more disciplined and controllable constables and guards. There was also a good argument to create a uniformed force due to the influx of foreigners who did not recognise the non-uniformed police members. Police badges made of metal with a number on it were introduced in 1936, which started to be worn on their breast.

The formation in 1938 of the elected Kuwait Legislative Council led to the introduction of laws regarding police and security. The Council introduced the Law of Public Security which guaranteed security within and outside of the town of Kuwait, the Law of Emergency which empowered authorities to take whatever measures were necessary to ensure public security in times of emergency, and a Law of Justice to ensure proper and fair legal administration. However, the overlaps between the Public Security Department and



Kuwait Cavalry, 1928. (Kuwait Police Museum)



Royal Marine and Royal Naval Landing Party providing defence in Kuwait, 1928. (Kuwait Police Museum)



Quick Firing 2 Pounder Maxim made by Vickers. Probably a Mark II as part of the defence of Kuwait Town, 1928. (Kuwait Police Museum)

the Police Department were not addressed, and this continued to cause problems until the late 1950s.

Around 1935, the ruler replaced his existing armed car force with 1935 V8 Fords Vanettes with open box superstructure. These vehicles were given to the ruler by the Kuwait Oil Company on the signing of the oil concession agreement. The vehicles were adapted to carry two Lewis guns, have a tripod for one gun on the roof over the driver's seat, a tank for 10 gallons of water, and three rifle racks as well as ammunition recesses.



A flight of Royal Air Force aircraft and armoured cars outside the south gate of Kuwait Town, 1928. (Kuwait Police Museum)



Royal Air Force Armoured Car Section at Kuwait Town in 1928. (Kuwait Police Museum)

The mid-1930s saw tensions between Iraq and Kuwait, one key reason being Iraq's loss of valuable custom duties. Following Iraq's nominal independence in 1932, Iraqi authorities increased their customs duties considerable. Consequently, the 15,000 or so shepherding Iraqis who travelled to Kuwait each year in winter with their herds also started buying goods there due to their much lower duties. They would then take their purchases back across the border which Iraqi officials characterised as smuggling. While some of it *was* smuggling, much of it was simply Iraqis buying lower cost goods for their own consumption. Iraqi efforts to pressure Kuwait to stop this trade including incursions by Iraqi police elements. For example, in 1934 four Iraqi armoured cars entered Kuwait territory and for some 10 days roamed around intimidating Kuwaitis, and several of their armed customs launches fired on Kuwait vessels. Iraqi officials benefited personally from enforcement action as they often kept confiscated goods, regardless of whether they were smuggled or legitimate. While Kuwait protested these 'anti-smuggling' activities, they were unable to confront Iraqi incursions directly due to their lack of capability. Another source of insecurity from Iraq arose during the 1935 rebellion in southern Iraq. It saw a spike in raids along the Iraq-Kuwait frontier region, although these

were suppressed by Kuwait increasing car patrols. The late 1930s saw relations between Kuwait and Iraq deteriorate. This was because Iraq had become increasingly insecure over its position on the Shat-al-Arab following the ratification of the Iraq-Iran treaty. To increase its access to the Arabian Gulf, Iraqi press commenced a campaign of agitation and propaganda against the ruler and claiming Kuwait as part of Iraq. Iraqi-sponsored disturbances occurred in Kuwait Town but these were effectively suppressed. Problems with Iraqi border officials fell after Britain's occupation of Iraq in 1941 but did not end.

1939–1959, THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE BEGINNING OF KUWAIT'S MODERN SECURITY FORCES

The threat of a war in Europe in the late 1930s drove Britain to undertake defence assessments of Kuwait along with other Gulf Arab states. The British Defence Plan for Kuwait in 1939 considered that its main threat remained ordinary tribal attacks. However, in addition to the traditional motivations of obtaining livestock, loot and prestige, such attacks could also arise out of manipulation and bribery by foreign agitators. The assessment noted that while both Iraq and Saudi Arabia would like to absorb Kuwait, neither would acquiesce to the other doing so, and thus these two potential

aggressors cancelled each other out. Iran was deemed extremely unlikely to attack Kuwait while Britain controlled the Gulf. There was also the possibility of sabotage, but this was considered of minor importance due to Kuwait having limited infrastructure or British interests worthy of attacking.

As in the 1930s, Britain expected the ruler to be responsible for his own defence except in the case of large, organised attacks. If a major attack occurred, the role of protecting Kuwait township would remain the responsibility of the ruler as he was considered to have sufficient forces to do so, assuming the walls were in good repair and adequately manned. British forces would then concentrate on controlling Al Jahra, Maqwa and the oil fields area. Maqwa was important as it now had a large water storage facility which was fed via a pipeline that started at the Shuwaik pumping site with water coming from dhows that brought water from Iraq. This meant that Maqwa was also a location from which raiders could be sustained while assaulting Kuwait Town.

The ruler's standing security forces as of 1939 were around 150 armed men (mostly *khudam*) with .303 rifles, the six Lewis guns on light vehicles (now three 1935 30hp, 2-ton Fords, and three 1939 6-cylinder 2-ton Chevrolets), and 80-strong armed town policemen plus the police guards. These forces could be bolstered as before by Bedu and townsman levies. The Bedu levies were expected to raise around 1,000 rifles. The British considered the Bedu as 'efficient from an Arab standard and would give a good account of themselves in any fight under Arab conditions.' However, 'care would have to be taken to ensure that the national characteristics of individuality are not destroyed in an attempt to improve the efficiency of the force, since it is on this individuality and initiative that the Arab's efficiency depends in a fight under Arab conditions.' The British Defence Plan considered that some 6,000 men and boys could be mobilised from the town. The townsman could be given arms from the ruler's arsenal, which now included some 30 Italian 'Tommy' guns. However, the ability of the town's defence was questioned. One issue was that the military deficiencies with the walls had not been rectified. This, the British considered, was because the ruler saw the wall less as a military defence and more as a deterrent to Kuwaitis attempting to smuggle goods out of the town. Thus, he resisted installing fire steps and other improvements which would allow people to rapidly man the walls and hence, be able to jump over the wall. Another issue which undermined the defence of the town was the lack of weapons now held by townspeople. Following the autumn 1938 rising in Kuwait Town, the ruler had ordered the townspeople disarmed. While the ruler held large numbers of weapons in his arsenal, the British considered that he would be very reluctant to hand them out for fear of the consequences.

Britain's plan for supporting Kuwait if facing a serious attack involved deploying RAF and naval support, plus in extraordinary circumstances army reinforcements from India. The RAF at this time had four prepared desert landing areas – one just outside Kuwait Town's wall which was the only one with a petrol store, and others at Al Jahra, Subaihiya just south of the Burgan well areas, and Milah which was two miles south of Maqwa. These aircraft would initially be drawn from Shaibah or possibly Bahrain. A section of six RAF armoured cars could be sent from Shaibah with these expected to reach Kuwait in under four hours. In addition, should a bomber/transport aircraft or a flying boat be available, the RAF could send from Iraq a composite platoon of airman to hold an area, such as the Maqwa camp, pending the arrival of the armoured cars or a relief force sent by the ruler. An RAF armoured car company could also be deployed from Habbaniya, however they would not reach Kuwait for

up to five days. Plans were developed to store four light automatics, 50 rifles and 10,000 rounds of ammunition at Maqwa with the expectation these would be used in an emergency by the 100-odd British and American civilian personnel at the camp. British naval support would come in the form of the sloops stationed in the Gulf, and their landing party which consisted of a self-contained platoon of 30 all ranks. Their role would be to secure the British political residency and a handful of other key locations in the town.

Some training of the ruler's forces was carried out by the British before the war. For example, in April 1939, a Quartermaster Sergeant of the Iraq Levies provided a three-week course in weapons training to the ruler's forces. Exercises involving both RAF and Kuwaiti forces were also carried out, such as one in 1938 which involved the ruler's forces, No 4 Section of the Armoured Car Company and aircraft of No 84 Squadron.

1942 AND THE FORMAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KUWAIT POLICE AND THE DIRECTORATE OF PUBLIC SECURITY

In 1942, Sheikh Ali Al Khalifa Al Abdullah Al-Sabah, governor of Kuwait Town and Director of Public Security, died. The ruler used this opportunity to formally organise his security administration into two components.

One was the Kuwait Town police (henceforth known as the Kuwait Police) which was headed by 29-year-old Sheikh Sabah (III) Al Salim (I) Al Mubarak (I) Al-Sabah, the future ruler of Kuwait. He had for several years held this post. The Kuwait Police were responsible for law enforcement, traffic control and criminal investigation within the walled town of Kuwait. It also guarded key locations in the town, with this task being undertaken by both constables and watchmen.

The other was the Directorate of Public Security, which was responsible for security outside of Kuwait Town, maintaining frontier control and controlling immigration. Its head was the 28-year-old Sheikh Abdullah Al Mubarak (I) Al-Sabah, the last living son of Mubarak the Great, and who had served as the second-in-command to Sheikh Ali Al Khalifa for several years.

There was considerable rivalry between the sheikhs who headed up the Kuwait Police and Directorate of Public Security and over the size and work of the two forces. This undermined effectiveness of the two forces and led to overlapping duties, a lack of cooperation and deliberately ignoring demarcation lines. For example, in 1953 the Kuwait Police was running traffic patrols outside the town on the road to the oil town of Al Ahmadi, and the Criminal Investigation Department of the Directorate of Public Security was making inquiries within Kuwait Town without working with Criminal Investigation Department of the Kuwait Town police.

The Kuwait Police (1942–1959)

The Kuwait Police existed as a separate entity between 1942 and 1959. Its head over this period was Sheikh Sabah (III). In 1959, it merged with the Directorate of Public Security to form the Police and Public Security Department. By 1953, the Kuwait Police had around 540 members, and in 1954, an Egyptian Jassim Al Qutami was appointed its General Director. He hired six Egyptian police with backgrounds in forensic science, criminal investigation, police dogs, traffic and weapons. These led the development of specialist departments within the police. Jassim Al Qutami lasted only two years before being asked to leave following his refusal to lead the police response to quell the anti-British demonstrations as the 1956

Suez Crisis unfolded. By 1955/56, the Kuwait Police numbered some 843 members.

In the mid-1950s, a mounted police section of 20 men was formed to assist in crowd control and ceremonial tasks. After visiting the stables of the London Mounted Police at Imber Court, Sheikh Sabah (III) ordered the construction of the same type of stables for his mounted police. An anti-riot squad was also established to deal with demonstrations. The police were then armed with SMLE rifles, and British SLR rifles were to be purchased.

A Police School was opened in 1956. Recruits were required to have Kuwaiti nationality, but this was regularly ignored. Recruits also needed to have no criminal record, be between 18 and 25 years of age, be 168cm in height and be physically fit. The recruits' course lasted four months and the men were taught to read and to write. Illiterate recruits, who formed the majority of those enlisted, spent the first two to three months entirely on reading and writing, police discipline and duties, first aid and drill. All illiterate or semi-illiterate men already in the police would in future be required to pass through the recruits' literacy course. Police officer cadets were sent to foreign police academics. In 1956, nine were attending a two-year course in Egypt, and one in Britain.

The late 1950s saw efforts to expand police numbers significantly, however, this was generally stymied by a lack of suitable recruits. Its planned establishment for 1957 was to be the General Director (lieutenant colonel), one major, one captain, 11 first lieutenants, 41 second lieutenants and 1,350 sergeants and constables. Civilian staff numbered 209 but were authorised to grow to 295 personnel.

Over most of its 17 years of existence, the police used converted private buildings as police stations and posts. These generally suffered from being poorly designed and sited from a security point of view. The late 1950s saw the first specifically built police stations.

The Directorate of Public Security (1942–1959)

The Directorate of Public Security existed until 1959 when it was merged with the Kuwait Police. During this time, its head was Sheikh Abdullah Al Mubarak (I). To undertake its responsibilities of providing security outside of Kuwait Town, the Directorate of Public Security had several different groups of personnel. One

was a mobile armed police to respond to incidents, another was a border group which manned border crossing points and patrolled the border, and a third provided static guards at key locations. It also had a group tasked with immigration and citizenship functions, including issuing and cancelling passports and visas.

The influx of oil revenue provided the revenue to allow the Directorate to expand, and the growing inflow of expatriates to support the state's oil-fuelled growth increased the workload of the Directorate. In the late 1940s, the Directorate started hiring Arab expatriate officers who had previously served in the Palestine Mandate Police to fill training and leadership posts. In 1949, the Directorate hired its first Britons. These were three British police sergeants who had also served in the Palestine Mandate Police. These three worked entirely on handling of cases of individuals subject to the British Order of Council. One of these, the locally-ranked Captain W. (Bill) Edge, would become the Commander of Abu Dhabi Police in the early 1960s. The Britons did not have a role in training or running the Directorate. In 1953 a Palestinian sergeant named Khalil Subaibr was hired following a recommendation from the ruler. His support from the ruler meant that his influence was significantly higher than would be typical for someone of his rank. Subaibr drove significant improvements to the training of police recruits.

To better manage the growing tasks of the Directorate, it was reorganised and new departments within it established. An early change was the organisation in 1948 of the armed police component into one group named the Kuwait Force. In 1953 it was renamed the Kuwait Army (details below). The structure of the Directorate of Public Security in 1954 is seen in Diagram 4. It shows the newly created an air wing for the Directorate, known as the Kuwait Flying Club (see the Kuwait Air Force section).

In the early 1950s, the Directorate of Public Security established a Criminal Investigation Department. Its role was to investigate criminal activity, including by visiting crime scenes and by providing technical support to local police stations and criminal intelligence. As of 1953, the Directorate's strength was around 1,200. In 1953, a Police Special Branch within the Criminal Investigation Department was established. Its role was to counter subversion within Kuwait and against the ruler in particular. The motivation for creating the

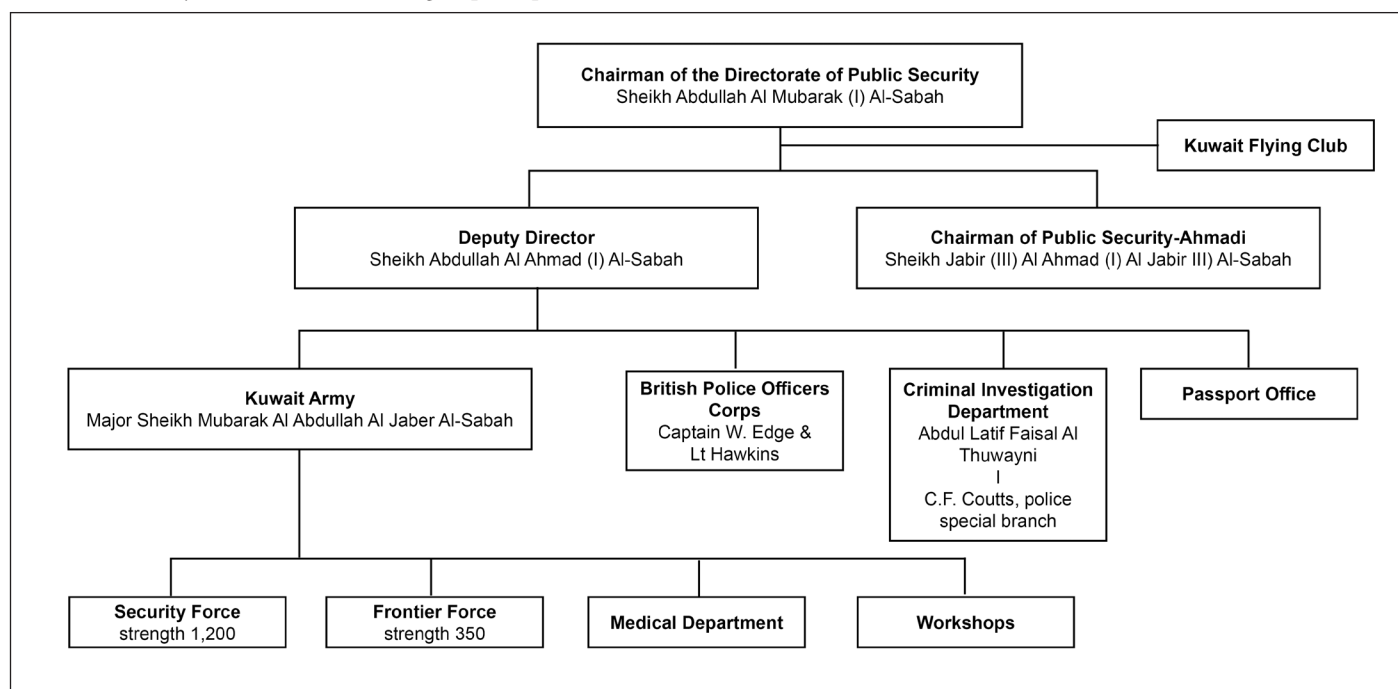


Diagram 4: The structure of the Directorate of Public Security, 1954. (Diagram by Athol Yates)



Kuwait Police uniform of the 1950s. The white sleeves denote the policeman is on traffic duties. Note collar numbers are in Arabic on right collar and European on the left. (Kuwait Police Museum)



Police guard of the Directorate of Public Security outside a sports ground, circa 1944. He is armed with a Short Magazine Lee Enfield (SMLE) Mark III. (Kuwait Police Museum)

Special Branch was the discovery of a revolutionary leftist cell in Kuwait. The Director of Public Security requested help from Britain in order to create the Special Branch and as a consequence, a Briton who had done this role in Sudan, C.F. Coutts, was engaged. He appears to have had strong links with British intelligence as he acted as a conduit for information in both directions, and carried out 'special work,' according to British archives. He remained until 1957 and was replaced with a Kuwaiti.

Another group established within the Directorate of Public Security was Public Security-Ahmadi. This group had its origins in the mid-1930s when permanent guards were stationed in the Maqwa camp and Burgan oil fields, and tasked with protecting oil company's equipment and facilities. In 1946 the oil town of Ahmadi was established. It contained both residential areas for Americans and other expatriates, and an area for the extraction, storage and refining of oil plus administration buildings. The Directorate of Public Security established a police station in Ahmadi and was responsible initially for policing and security only in the town. The oil company was responsible for security in its industrial areas. To manage its security responsibilities, the company employed its own security staff for the investigation of thefts etc, with its core being six Britons who were appointed under Kuwait's Special Police Officers Regulation. By 1953, the friction between the company's security branch

and the Ahmadi police led to the abolition of the former with its responsibly being taken over by the later. In 1954, there were some 150 guards posted to Public Security-Ahmadi.

Since 1949, Public Security-Ahmadi was under the control of Sheikh Jabir (III) Al Ahmad (I) Al Jabir (III) Al-Sabah, a future ruler of Kuwait. His status meant that it operated somewhat autonomously from the Directorate of Public Security. In 1957, Public Security-Ahmadi was officially separated from the control of the Directorate of Public Security. It thus became in effect a security force solely focused on protecting Kuwait Oil Company assets and personnel. This force, which became known as the Ahmadi Force, in 1957 had a total strength of four officers, 270 enlisted police personnel and 500 recently enlisted Bedu police guards most of who were from Saudi tribes. The roles of the police personnel were normal police duties and patrols, while the police guards' role was



Men of the Police and Public Security, late 1950s. Note the Ford F 250 pickup truck in the background with a Bren LMG mounted on top of the cab. (Kuwait Police Museum)



Armed Ford F 250 1/2-ton truck of the Police and Public Security Department, late 1950s. The weapons shown are a Mark III .303 Bren LMG on the cab roof, and the Mauser K98 7.92 mm bolt action rifles. The Arabic inscription on the cab door states 'Al Shurta Wa Al Amen Al Aam' which is 'Police and Public Security'. (Kuwait Police Museum)

as static guards on oil wells in the Al Ahmadi, Bergan and Maqwa areas in the south-east and also at the north-eastern Raudhatain field and oil export port Mina Ahmadi. The Ahmadi Force had a 14-man Criminal Investigation Department, which was responsible for both criminal and traffic accident investigations. The arms of the force consisted of .38 revolvers and .303 SMLE rifles, plus some 15 Thomson sub machine guns. Its main vehicles were jeeps, Humber pickups and 3-ton troop-carrying trucks. Around the time the force was established, Sheikh Jabir (III) purchased some 40 horses and instituted horse patrols in the oilfield areas.

The Kuwait Army

In 1953, the Kuwait Force within the Directorate of Public Security was renamed the Kuwait Army. The Kuwait Army had two components – the Security Force and the Frontier Force. As of 1954, the strength of the Kuwait Army was around 1,600 of which 1,200 were in the Security Force and 350 in the Frontier Force. In times of insecurity, the force would be bolstered by Bedu retainers of the Director of Public Security, Sheikh Abdullah Al Mubarak (I).

The Security Force was in effect an armed police force being equipped with rifles and light machine guns. The bulk of its manpower acted as a static guarding force, mostly outside the walled town and at the oil fields. In addition, 50-man guard posts were located at the gates of Kuwait Town, and guards were also stationed at the British Political Agency and American Consulate. The Security Force also provided the personal bodyguard of the ruler, a group in 1954 of around 100 men. The Security Force also had a pipe band, a silver band and a brass band.

The Frontier Force had a strength of around 350, and its main roles were patrolling the frontier and desert to counter illegal immigration and smuggling, countering protests and riots outside of Kuwait Town, and guarding the head of the Directorate and important visitors. It also provided static guards at border crossings and escorting convoys.

In 1952, the Frontier Force received 10 Daimler Dingo Scout Cars, and 25 Bren gun carriers were added in 1953. It also had 11 jeeps mounting Bren guns. By 1953, the Frontier Force was structured as a motorised company made up of three line squadrons

with an attached armoured car squadron. Each line squadron had a strength between 80 and 90 men made up of four troops, and was commanded by a second lieutenant or sergeant. Each squadron rotated monthly through one of the force's three locations of the Frontier Force barracks in Kuwait Town which was also where training occurred, its workshop in Kuwait Town, and at the Iraq frontier. The armoured vehicles remained at the Frontier Force barracks where the crews trained. Only jeeps (armed and unarmed) were used to patrol the frontier.

The introduction of Dingo Scout Cars and Bren gun carriers resulted in Kuwait asking Britain to provide a

seconded British Army officer with experience of armoured cars to serve as the chief instructor and advisor of the Frontier Force. He was supported by three seconded NCOs. The officer was Major P.M. Boileau, an Arabic speaker having served in Palestine, Egypt and Libya. He arrived in December 1953 and became the de-facto head of the Frontier Force until 1958 when he left. He was replaced with a group of seconded British Army personnel, known as the British Kuwait Liaison Team which continued to exist under various names until 1990 when Iraq invaded Kuwait.

The Kuwait Army in the 1950s suffered from a shortage of capable officers and lack of supervision, and a shortage of Kuwait nationals both as officers and enlisted men. Thus, some 80 percent of the officers were expatriates, mostly Palestinian, and bulk of the rank and file were Saudi Bedu. These Bedu could gain Kuwaiti citizenship through service and payment. For the Frontier Force, the more skilled enlisted posts of drivers and machine gunners were held by Iraqi and Jordanians, with the latter often having served in the Jordanian Arab Legion.

By 1956, the Kuwait Army had grown to some 2,500. The Frontier Force was over 1,000 and Security Force around 1,400. British military assessments at the time considered the Frontier Force was the better of the two in terms of discipline, competence, morale and training.

1961–1980, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, KUWAIT POLICE AND THE KUWAIT STATE SECURITY SERVICE

In 1961, the Police and Public Security Department was reorganised to create the Ministry of Interior. The first Minister of Interior was Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah (III) Al Salim (I) Al-Sabah who also held the post of Deputy Prime Minister. The Ministry's bureaucratic head was the Under-Secretary, and the first incumbent was Colonel (later Major General) Abdul Latif Faisal Al Thuwaini. Structurally, the Ministry was organised into general departments and departments, with the latter being smaller. Kuwait Police personnel were located across all departments although in more administrative ones, while Ministry of Interior civilians were more numerous.

The 1960s saw a significant growth in the number of police personnel in the Ministry. In 1960, they numbered 1,500, and in

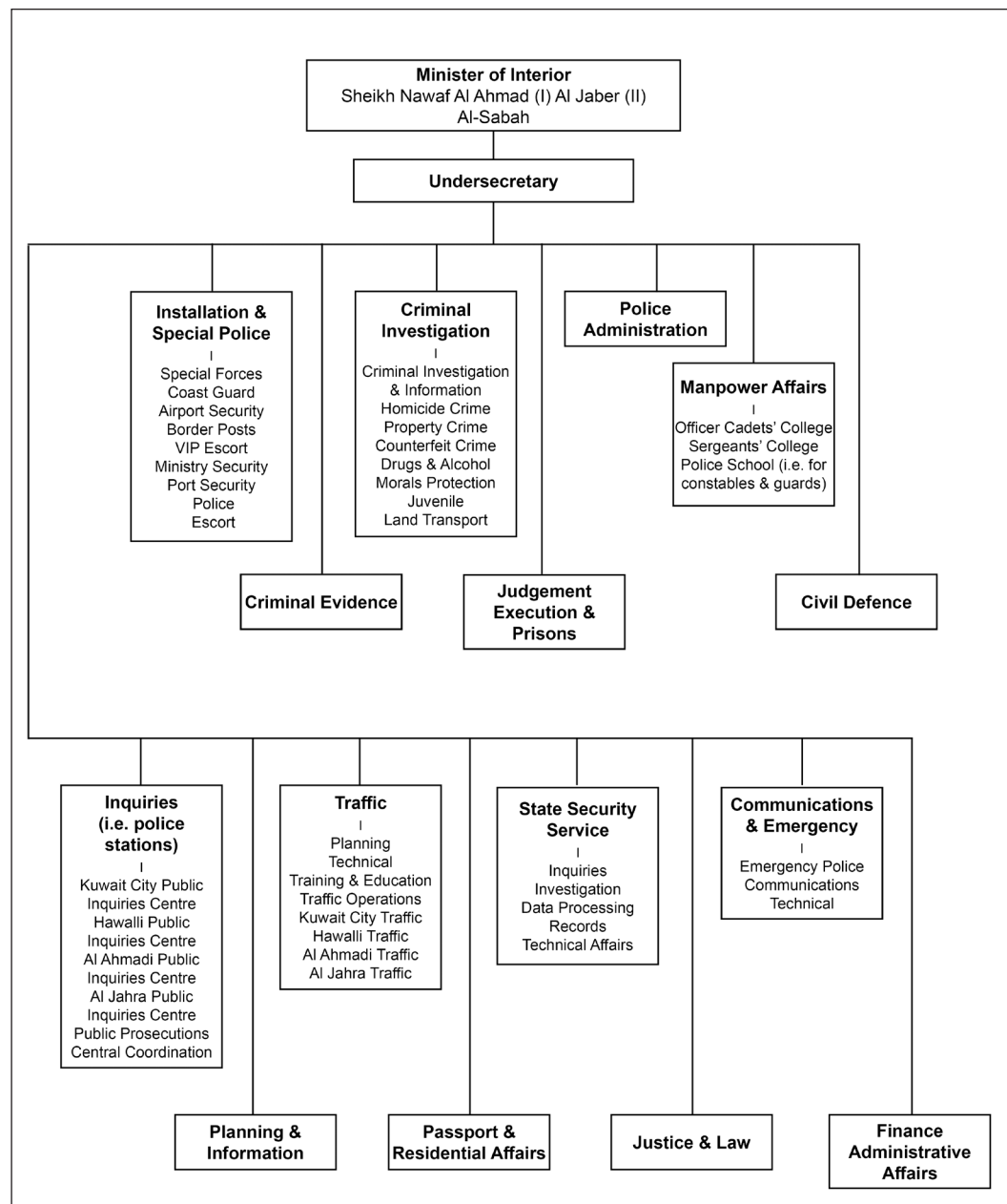


Diagram 5: The structure of the Ministry of Interior, 1979, with each box listing the General Department and its key subordinate departments. (Diagram by Athol Yates)

1969 some 6,700. This size made the Kuwait Police one of the largest police forces in the world in relation to the size of the population. Police officer grades were the same as in the Kuwait Armed Forces, however, police enlisted ranks did not follow those of the military. Instead, it had five rank grades: in descending order being master sergeant, corporal, policeman first class, policeman and police guard.

The police force was made up of three quite different demographics which aligned with the three rank levels of officers, senior NCOs and constables/guards. The officers were Kuwaitis who were educated and came from upper-class families. The senior NCOs were semi-educated Kuwait nationals and non-nationals, and the constables/guards were mostly uneducated Bedu, both with and without Kuwaiti citizenship. Given their lack of education, literacy among constables/guards was low at just 46 percent. Although this would rise to 80 percent in 1975, even then only 10 percent of them had full writing fluency.

Because of their education and nationality, constables/guards were generally not respected by the public nor their superiors, and this lack of respect was reciprocated. Public dissatisfaction with

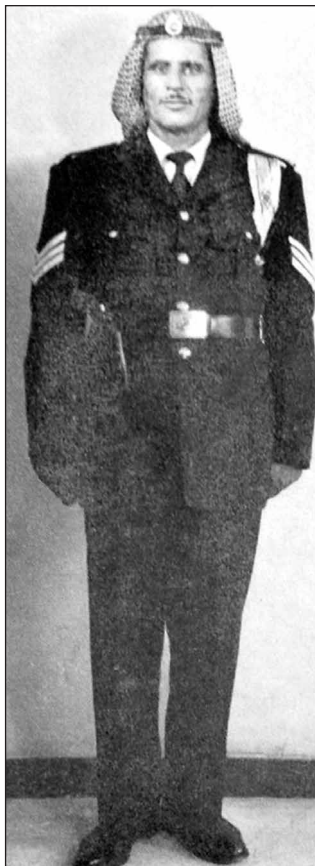
the police grew in the second half of the 1960s due to a lack of police accountability, the rising crime rates and ineffective enforcement of immigration laws resulting in large and growing number of non-legal migrants in Kuwait. Of particular concern to Kuwaiti nationals was the belief that police who did not hold citizenship delivered lower quality police service as they had no stake in the country. This became an enduring public criticism of the police. While one solution was to grant citizenship to these police members, Kuwaiti nationals opposed such a move. It would only be in the late 1970s that non-native police members could obtain citizenship via naturalisation, and then only after 20 years of service plus other conditions.

The organisation of the on-the-ground police was structured around a headquarters and the nation's governorates of which there were three: Hawalli, Al Ahmadi and Kuwait City up until 1978 when a fourth governorate, Al Jahra, came into being. The senior police officer in each governorate was known as the Director of Security, and while appointed by the Minister of Interior worked for the governor of the respective governorate. Each governorate

was divided into a number of district police commands, each headed by a commander appointed by the governor. The largest governorate was Kuwait City. As of the mid-1970s, its Director of Security was headed by a full colonel, and reporting to him was nine district commands, each headed by a captain, major or lieutenant colonel. Each district included a handful of police stations, each manned in shifts of three to four officers, three or more NCOs, and 10 or more policemen and police guards. In 1969, there were 67 police stations across the state, manned by 1,200 men. The Ministry of Interior manned the crossing points at their borders, and in the early 1970s there were five crossing points along the Iraqi border. The 1960s saw the Ministry of Interior establish the Emergency Police. These were vehicle-based police located at police stations and headquarters which would respond to emergencies. A riot control force, known as the Motorised Strike Force or Mobile Police Reserve, of 300 members was stationed at the Sulaibakhat barracks. From late 1975, Kuwait Police accepted women provided they were unmarried, Kuwaiti nationals, aged between 20 and 26, had higher education and passed the aptitude tests.



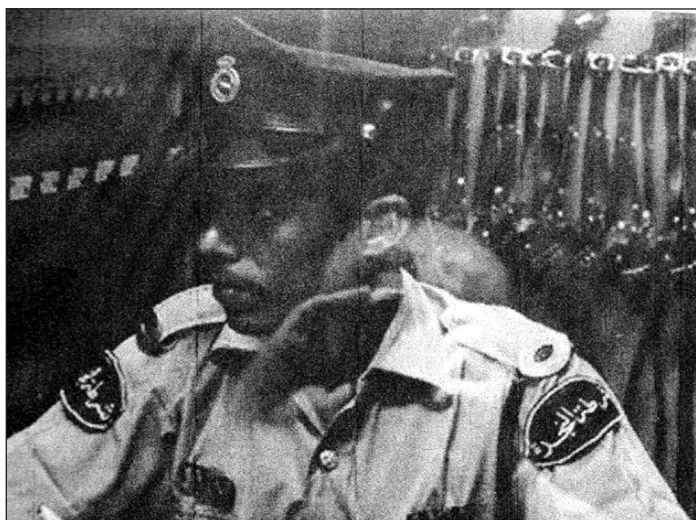
A mounted policeman, Kuwait Police, 1960s. (Kuwait Police Museum)



Sergeant of Kuwait Police, 1960s. (Kuwait Police Museum)



Kuwait policeman in summer uniform, 1960s. (Kuwait Police Museum)



The police armoury, 1960s. On the policeman's arm is patch with the Arabic 'Shurtat al Najda' meaning 'Emergency Police'. The Emergency Police were based at police stations and GHQ and responded to incidents and other emergencies. Traffic Police had 'shurtat al muroor' on their arm. The cap badge is post-independence. (Kuwait Police Museum)

Officer education became more systematic in 1968 when the Kuwait Police Officer Cadets' College was established to train police officer cadets. Only Kuwaiti nationals could attend the college. The first batch of 37 officers graduated in 1971, and by 1980, some 100 were graduating each year. Training of senior officers was generally undertaken in London and Cairo.

Ongoing public dissatisfaction with the police led to a reorganisation of the structure of the Ministry of Interior in 1974. This saw several new departments between created and others merged together (see Diagram 5). In addition, in 1975 a plan was adopted to improve the quality of police personnel, as well as



A member of the Emergency Police, 1960s. The Emergency Police were a vehicle-based group with elements located at police stations and GHQ, and who could respond to routine emergencies. (Kuwait Police Museum)



Kuwait Police pipe band, 1960s. (Kuwait Police Museum)



Kuwait Police march past, late 1950s or early 1960s, carrying SMLE with fixed bayonets. The ceremonial uniform of the post-independence police force consisted of a black jacket including collars and cuffs, which had three buttons. The trousers were red. Their headdress was a white *shemagh* and black *agal*. (Kuwait Police Museum)

improve infrastructure and communications. One element of this was to establish an NCO College. It accepted recruits who were between 18 and 25 years of age, had left school with an intermediate degree, and were a Kuwaiti national, although this last requirement was regularly waived. The average number of graduates from the Sergeants' College per year between 1975 and 1980 was 250. This contrasts with the Police School which between 1975 and 1980 graduated yearly around 180 police and 100 guards.

By 1980, there were some 12,400 police personnel in the Ministry of Interior, which consisted of 973 officers (eight percent), 8,809 NCOs and constables (71 percent) and 2,631 guards (21 percent). This was a substantially different force from the start of the decade. The number of officers as a percentage of the force had increased, the number of NCO and constables had grown, while the number of guards decreased. The latter was a result of an emphasis on training of the former group and letting go of the older untrained guards. The continual shortage of Kuwaitis applying to join the police meant that as of 1976 around 50 percent of the police were non-Kuwaitis. However, almost all officers and 75 percent of NCOs were Kuwaitis. The figure dropped to 47 percent for constables and under 20 percent for guards.

In 1980, the distribution of police allocated to the four governorates was 1,600 for Kuwait City, 2,000 for Hawalli, 900 for Al Ahmadi and 700 for Al Jahra. The reason for the larger police numbers in Hawalli compared to Kuwait City was that the former had grown in population and was experiencing a higher incidence of crime. In addition to the 12,400 police personnel, the Ministry of Interior employed some 5,700 civilians, of which nearly 60 percent were Kuwaiti citizens.

Kuwait State Security Service

The origins of the Kuwait State Security Service (KSSS) starts with the formation in 1953 of a Police Special Branch within Criminal Investigation Department of the Kuwait Police. In 1965, the Police Special Branch became a separate entity, and shortly afterwards it was renamed the KSSS. It reported directly to the Ministry of Interior's Under-Secretary, however with the appointment in 1967 of its new head, Colonel Mishal Al Ahmad (I) Al Jaber (II) Al-Sabah, it became somewhat more independent, and increasingly reported directly to the Minister of Interior and the ruler himself. Sheikh Mishal was the half-brother of the Prime Minister and son-in-law of the ruler of Kuwait. He remained the head of KSSS until 1980. The direct link between the head of the KSSS and the ruler was not unexpected given the political nature of the post and that its holder was a member of the ruling family.

The primary roles of the KSSS were to protect the ruler and his close family from being overthrown, and the state from subversion. The key threat to the Sabah leadership in the 1960s was considered to be disaffected old Kuwaiti families who carried out their personal feuds against the ruler's family under the cloak of Arab nationalism. The subversion threat was seen to be driven by foreign powers, notably Iraq and the United Arab Republic. The late 1960s also saw the KSSS broaden its focus into non-security areas, including illegal immigration and moral lapses by Kuwaitis. Given these priorities, the KSSS was completely taken by surprise when in November 1968 and January 1969, bombing attacks were carried out in Kuwait by a new adversary – less privileged Kuwaitis who were inspired by various pan-Arab, leftist and revolutionary ideologies. The attack was carried out by the newly formed People's Revolutionary Movement in Kuwait which was aligned with the Arab Nationalist Movement. Its ideology was based on Marxism-Leninism and it advocated armed resistance to end both Britain's remaining influence in the region and bringing down the monarchical and tribal system in Kuwait. The November 1968 bomb attack targeted the car convey of the Shah of Iran in front of the Iranian Embassy in downtown Kuwait City. The January 1969 attack saw explosives set in three locations – the buildings of the National Assembly and the Ministry of Interior, and the home of the Interior Minister. The attacks were accompanied by a propaganda campaign seeking to incite the Kuwaiti people to join the movement against the regime in Kuwait. The lack of awareness of the new revolutionary greatly explains why it took the KSSS until April 1969 to identify those who were responsible.

The failure of the KSSS to not even have been aware of the group appears to have led to substantial changes in the intelligence service. The KSSS now took the better graduates from the Kuwait Police Officer Cadets' College, removed a number of ineffective mid-level leaders, and increased information sharing about regional subversive organisations and their members with neighbouring countries. However, one notable weakness continued – a lack of any central intelligence entity in Kuwait which coordinated the activities of the two intelligence services – KSSS and the Kuwait Army's Intelligence



Graduation of the first batch of Coast Guard personnel, mid-1950s. (Kuwait Police Museum)

Bureau. The lack of such an entity meant that intelligence sharing, assessment and planning was rare and when it occurred, was mostly ad hoc and at a low level.

By 1976, KSSS had grown to 146 members of whom 17 were officers, 63 were NCOs, 35 were constables/soldiers, 29 were civilians and two were guards.

Police Coast Guard

The Police Coast Guard was established in the 1950s to support the Directorate of Public Security in countering illegal immigration and smuggling. In the late 1950s, Kuwait purchased a number of launches for the service and built the Coast Guard unit barracks at Shuwaikh and police jetty. The barracks consisted of a ground-floor barrack room with accommodation for about 40 men, canteen, offices, cells and arms store. On the upper floor, there were three flats for married officers.

Until 1966, the Coast Guard's vessels were all locally built motorised police launches. That year, ten 78ft coastal patrol craft from Vosper Thorneycroft were ordered. These 40-ton displacement craft had a crew



A member of the Coast Guard, 1960s. He is wearing a British style black Royal Naval hat with no cap tally but with the Police badge on the front. The policeman's number was worn on their chest. (Kuwait Police Museum)

of 12, and could carry one machine gun. Known as the Al Salemi-class, two arrived in 1966 (*Al Salemi* and *Al Mubarak*), two in 1968 (*Aman* and *Maymoon*), two in 1969 (*Marzook* and *Mashoor*), two in 1970 (*Murshed* and *Wathah*), and the last two in 1972 (*Al Shurti*



Intisar, an Al Salemi-class patrol boat, 1972. (Ivan Gogin, Navypedia)



Qahir, a Dastoor-class coastal patrol boat, 1979. (Ivan Gogin, Navypedia)



Mahroos, a Mahroos-class coastal patrol boat, 1975. (Ivan Gogin, Navypedia)

and *Intisar*). Developing a system to maintain these more complex vessels and new communication and surveillance equipment resulted in the Ministry of Interior hiring a British Engineering Superintendent, Mr Phillips. He would run the Coast Guard's shore establishment for the next several years.

When in the late 1960s, the Minister of Defence considered establishing a navy, thought was given to either expanding the Coast Guard to become the Navy, or for the Coast Guard to assist in establishing the Navy. However, both options were rejected as the Coast Guard organisation was considered fundamentally unsuited to being adapted into a naval force, and that the Coast Guard was fully extended in addressing its own growth challenges and had no spare capacity to help a new navy.

Between 1974 and 1979, the Coast Guard received five Vosper Thornycroft 56ft coastal patrol craft. Known as the Dastoor-class, two arrived in 1974 (*Dastoor* and *Kasar*) and three in 1979 (*Qahir*, *Sagar* and *Salam*). These had a crew of eight and could carry one machine gun. These were augmented by one Vosper 46ft coastal patrol boat (*Mahroos*, crew of five and commissioned in 1976) and one Halter Cutlass 19.7m patrol craft (*Dhaheer*, crew of 15 and commissioned in 1979).

By the start of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980, the Coast Guard had some 20 ageing and lightly armed patrol craft. These could not operate effectively at night nor in rough weather, meaning that Kuwait was vulnerable to not only illegal immigration but also infiltration from either party in the war.

1957–1980, THE KUWAIT ARMY, KUWAIT ARMED FORCES AND MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

The history of the Kuwait Army and its predecessor force have already been described. In summary, in 1948 the Directorate formed the Kuwait Force, which in 1953 was renamed the Kuwait Army. This was divided into two components – the Security Force which was an armed police force responsible for internal security and the Frontier Force responsible for border protection, and control of illegal goods and migrant entry.

The Early Years, 1957–1968

In 1957, the Kuwait Army became independent from the Directorate of Public Security, although administratively the separation would take a number of years before it was complete. Despite the change, political oversight remained with Sheikh Abdullah Al Mubarak (I), who now carried the title of the Commander-in-Chief of the

Kuwait Army as well as head of the Public Security. The former head of the Kuwait Army, Sheikh Mubarak Al Abdullah Al Jaber Al-Sabah, now became the Deputy Commander-in-Chief.

In 1959, the headquarters of the Kuwait Army moved the Directorate of Public Security to the Al Jaiwan compound. This location had two advantages – the army was now in a better position to deploy forces to block a land invasion from Iraq, and it was now well away from the capital which would have made any coup attempt by it

more difficult.

Motivated by the increasing threat from Iraq, linked to the 1958 Iraqi revolution, and Iraq's increasing hostility to the influence of Britain in Kuwait, the late 1950s saw the Kuwait Army transform into a traditional armed force. Its responsibilities for internal security, notably guarding civilian buildings and countering illegal immigration, smuggling, protests and riots, were transferred to the Police and Public Security Department (which had been formed in 1959 with the merger of the Directorate of Public Security and Kuwait Police). The Frontier Force became a mechanised unit whose primary task was now the defence of the frontiers. To fulfil its mission, Kuwait ordered 12 Saladin armoured cars and 16 Centurion Mark 3 tanks. Eight of the tanks were for the use of the Kuwaiti Army with the other eight being stockpiled in case Britain should send forces to defend Kuwait.

The delivery of the new armoured fighting vehicles required increased professional military advice and technical support for this sustainment. Britain obliged with the provision of a small group of seconded British personnel, known as the Kuwait Training Team. This was renamed the Kuwait Liaison Team in 1961. The team in 1960 consisted of one regular British officer (Lieutenant Colonel J.E.P. Peirce) plus three senior NCOs. The actual technical support of the vehicles relied heavily on British, Indian, Pakistani and foreign Arab technicians employed on contract.

By early 1960, the Kuwait Army had been restructured (see Diagram 6). The force's key combat units were now five rifle companies, three armoured car squadrons, an armoured scout troop, an armoured squadron, a field artillery battery, an anti-tank squadron and a medium machine gun company. The force had access to two helicopters which were controlled by the Police and Public Security Department. The force's composition as of early 1960 was 36 Arab officers and approximately 1,200 to 1,300 mostly Arab ORs plus around 100 civilians. Given the large number of units and the military's manpower strength, a number of the units were significantly undermanned. For example, in 1960 the Medium Machine Gun Company was at half strength as half of its personnel had been taken to provide Centurion crews. Another issue was the small number of officers, which led to problems of supervision, training programming and logistics. The shortage of officers became more pronounced following the dismissal over 1961 and 1962 of numbers of Palestinian officers as they were seen as a subversive threat.

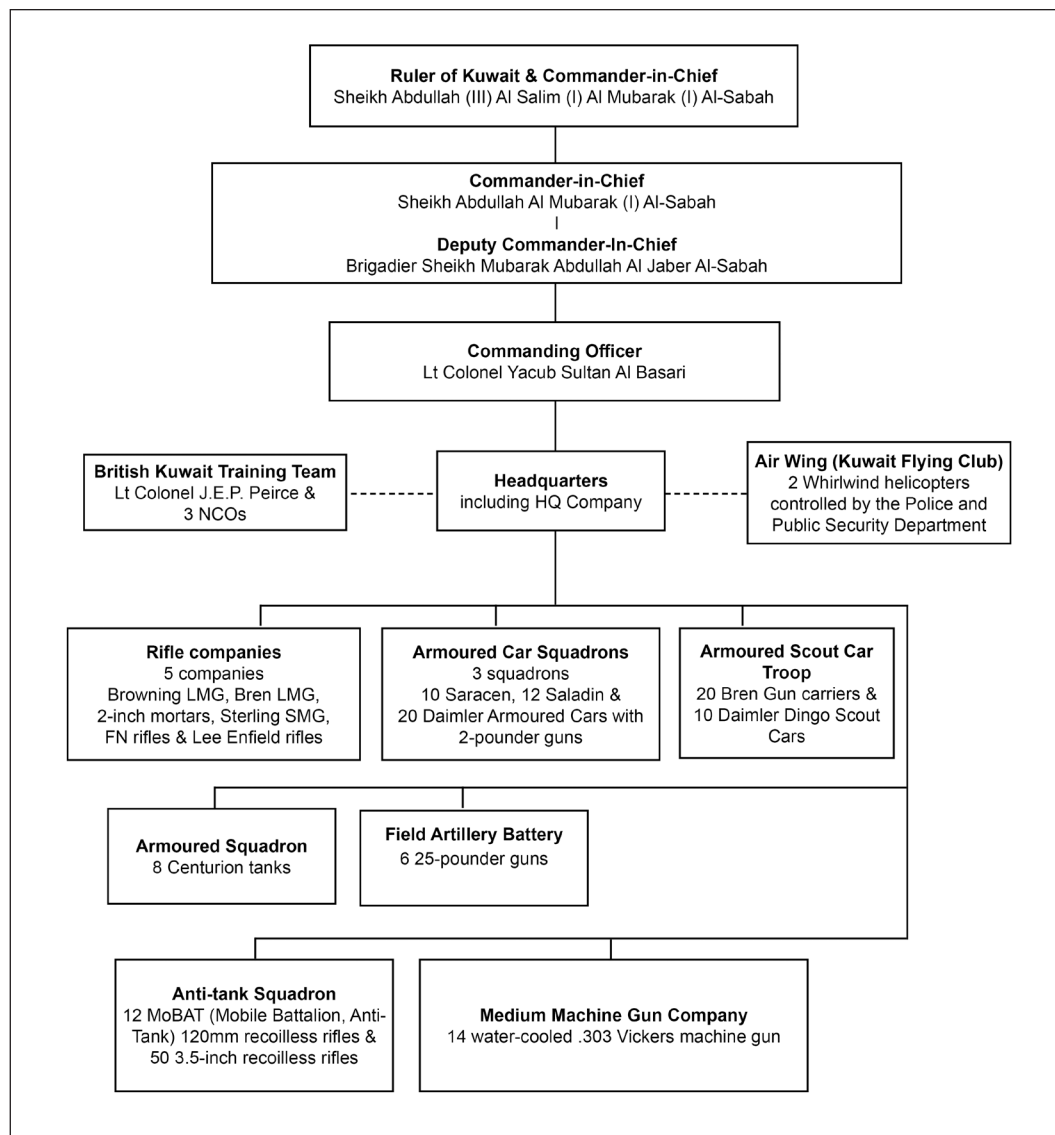


Diagram 6: The structure of the Kuwait Army, April 1960. (Diagram by Athol Yates)

The Iraqi Threat to Kuwait and Kuwait's Defence – 1961

On 19 June 1961, the ruler of Kuwait and Britain signed an Exchange of Notes which made Kuwait a fully independent state. The exchange annulled the 1899 'Exclusive Agreement' which had made Kuwait a protected state of Britain. The 1961 one page Exchange of Notes included the statements that 'The relations between the two countries shall continue to be governed by a spirit of close friendship ... [and there remains] the readiness of Her Majesty's Government to assist the Government of Kuwait if the latter request such assistance.' This 'readiness' could include the defence of Kuwait if the ruler requested it and Britain agreed to do so. This commitment would last until 13 May 1971 when Kuwait and Britain agreed to its end.

The President of Iraq, General Abd al-Karim Qasim, claimed the agreement was illegal and invalid as Kuwait had no authority to enter into any international treaty as it was an integral part of Iraq. This claim had long been made by the leaders of Iraq but in the last few years, both Britain and Kuwait were increasingly concerned that Iraq may actually act on its rhetoric and invade. Starting in 1958, Britain had been drawing up contingency plans to counter an Iraqi attack, and these culminated in the Operation Vantage plan of November 1960. Statements made by the President of Iraq and concentration of Iraqi troops in nearby Basra in late June 1961 made the ruler and Britain believe that Iraq would attack Kuwait on 14 July.

As reversing an invasion once it had begun would be extremely costly, the ruler and the British Government agreed to pre-emptively deploy British troops as a deterrent to invasion. On 30 June 1961, Vantage was initiated. Over the following few days, over 6,000 British troops deployed to Kuwait with strong naval and air backing. Vantage was successful and Iraq did not attack. By 11 October, British forces had been withdrawn and replaced by Arab forces organised by the Arab League. In 1963, Iraq recognised Kuwait's independence, although it continued to challenge Kuwait's claim to certain border areas.

The threat from Iraq resulted in a significant expansion of Kuwait forces, both in personnel numbers and equipment. In November and December 1961 alone, a total of 2,613 new troops were recruited. The expansion slowed in the following year, due to both the declining threat from Iraq and fears among the Sabah ruling family that the Army was growing too fast to be kept under firm control. By the end of 1962, the Army's

focus was now on absorbing the large amount of new materiel. The force was now around 5,700 men of which 4,500 were in combat units. Its armoured vehicle fleet now consisted of 24 Centurion tanks, 39 Saracen APCs and Saladin armoured cars, 20 Daimler armoured cars and 49 Ferret Scout Cars. It was also equipped with some six 25-pounder guns, 35 Bren guns, 100 Sterling sub machine guns and 14 Vickers water-cooled .303 machine guns.

To ensure reliability and competence of the military, the early 1960s period saw an increase in members of Al-Sabah family joining the armed forces, with a number having graduated from Sandhurst.

The early 1960s saw changes to Kuwait's higher defence arrangements. One change was the creation of a Ministry of Defence and the post of Minister of Defence. The first Minister of Defence was Sheikh Mohammed Al Ahmad (I) Al Jaber Al-Sabah, who was also the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior. The Ministry was a civil service entity run by civilians and had no military, operational or planning function. It was in effect the same as the Defence Secretariat in the British Ministry of Defence. Its key functions were financial including pay, administrative including housing, and liaison with external organisations, both within and outside the country. A Supreme Defence Council was also established in 1963 which became the highest political body in charge of defence affairs. The Council is headed by the ruler, the Prime Minister, and senior security and governmental ministers.

By 1980, these included the Ministers of Defence, Interior, Foreign Affairs, Finance and State for Cabinet Affairs, plus the Commander of the National Guard.

In 1963 the military was renamed the Kuwait Armed Forces. Despite what its new name implied, the force remained essentially a single service (land forces) with an air and eventually a naval wing. This situation would continue well into the 1970s. Control over the air wing (which became the Kuwait Air Force in 1963) and the naval wing (which became the Kuwait Navy in 1968) was centralised within the General Staff. The headquarters of the Kuwait Armed Forces was structured along the lines of a land forces headquarters. Its head was the Chief of the General Staff, Brigadier Sheikh Mubarak Al Abdullah Al Jaber Al-Sabah. The General Staff under him were organised along French lines and had the four branches of Operations and Training, Administration, Intelligence, and Stores and Supplies. In the early 1960s, the head of Operations and Training was ranked at a colonel level, while the heads of the other branches were majors.

The period from early 1962 to the end of 1967 saw the Kuwait Armed Forces grow slowly as new equipment was absorbed, more personnel to build the units recruited and trained, and doctrine in how to counter the Iraqi threat evolved as new Kuwaiti units became effective.

In 1962, the land forces' combat elements were structured into three brigade groups – the 6th and 15th Mixed Brigades and the 35th Armoured Brigade (this structure can be seen in Diagram 7). As of December 1963, the 6th Brigade had a strength of 1,835 men located at Jaiwan Camp. It was comprised of the 5th Infantry Battalion equipped with twelve 120mm calibre MoBAT recoilless anti-tank rifles, four medium machine guns, and 60 light machine guns, the 10th Armoured Battalion equipped with 31 armoured cars and 14 Ferret scout cars, and the 1st Field Artillery Battalion equipped with thirteen 25-pounder guns. The 15th Brigade had a strength of 1,835 men located at Qasr Mushrif. It was comprised of the 2nd Infantry Battalion equipped with 12 MoBATs, the 1st Armoured Battalion equipped with 21 armoured cars, 20 Ferret scout cars, and a Vickers Vigilant platoon which was equipped with 15 operational missiles and 15 training missiles. The 35th Armoured Brigade had a strength of 370 men and located at Jaiwan Camp. It was comprised of the 7th, 8th and 9th Tank Battalions each equipped with seven Centurion tanks. The other main elements of the land forces located at Jaiwan Camp were the Training School which had a strength of 750 men, the Guards Battalion with a strength of 290, and the Frontier Force with a strength of 460. The Frontier Force maintained seven posts along the Iraq-Kuwait frontier, with six of the posts having a strength of 50 men, and one with 100 men. The Signal Corps, strength of 150, was located at Jaiwan Camp with a forward operations centre at Al Jahra camp. The Military Police had a strength of 150 and headquartered 20 miles west of Kuwait. The order of battle from 1963 identifies a force which would support the Kuwait land forces – the National Guard. This consisted of approximately 1,200 part-time, unpaid volunteers armed with rifles and sub-machine guns.

By late 1967, the Kuwait land forces had been structured into four armoured and mixed brigades. The brigades were somewhat smaller than the British equivalent ones of that period, which were typically around 4,000 men each. This compares with the Kuwaiti brigades which probably had on average fewer than 2,000 men as the total Kuwait Armed Forces had just around 8,400 personnel in 1967. The problem of a shortage of officers remained as seen in the fact that at that time there were just 270 officers.

The force, while improving, remained relatively weak and unsophisticated. This situation can be attributed to both a sense of relative security following Kuwait's normalisation of relations with Iraq in 1963, and the lack of adequate personnel.

Participation in the Third Arab-Israeli War, 1967

In 1964, a resolution by the 13 member states of the Arab League formed the Unified Arab Command. This organisation was a pan-Arabic force headquartered in Cairo and was tasked with defensive military planning against Israel. Kuwait was a substantial financial donor to the organisation, and along with other members, allocated forces to be commanded by it.

As tensions built up to what became the Third Arab-Israeli War (5 to 10 June 1967), Kuwait had in late May 1967 sent by air some 1,120 men to Egypt to assist in its defence. Kuwait's force consisted of around 550 men from the Commando Battalion, 500 men from 5 Infantry Battalion of the 6th Infantry Brigade, plus headquarters and support personnel. Armoured vehicles were expected to be sent by land but this did not occur before the fighting ended. During light engagements with the Israelis in Sinai during June 1967, the Kuwaitis performed well and destroyed several Israeli tanks.

1968–73, the five-year transformation

Following the January 1968 announcement by Britain that it intended to withdraw from the Gulf by 1971, the Kuwait ruler recognised that he needed to urgently improve his military. To assist, Britain offered to send a team to examine Kuwait's defence needs and develop a five-year plan (1968–73) for the expansion and re-equipment of its armed force. This was accepted by the ruler. The study identified two threats – Iraq and Iran – with threats from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab states deemed to be non-existent. Of the two, Iraq was seen as the greater threat. The team considered that Iraq's most likely attacks would be a land invasion of up to two divisions with at least one being armoured, and/or maritime interdiction involving nuisance mining and maritime harassment. These attacks would most probably be supported by limited air bombardment plus the occupation of some of Kuwait's islands. The threat from Iran was expected to be primarily an amphibious assault on several of Kuwait's islands, coupled with other maritime attacks and aerial bombardment. Assessing the ability of Kuwait to defend itself, the team recognised that despite Kuwait having four brigades, in reality these amounted to little more than one brigade in British terms. Kuwait's air force was considered to have limited utility in both air defence and ground attack roles for it then consisted of just a handful of ground attack aircraft. The assessment was that if Iraq committed a full force attack, Kuwait would be able to resist for at most five days. Given Iraq's overwhelming forces, the team recommended that Kuwait's defence strategy should be based on Kuwait building up its forces to slow the attacks rather than stopping and then reversing the offensive. Slowing down assaults would buy time for diplomatic pressure to be applied to end the offensive and for additional military support to arrive from allies and friends.

The changing security environment in the late 1960s saw Kuwait embark on a significant rearmament program. New land forces equipment obtained included 10 Centurion tanks (with the existing 40 Centurions being up-gunned from the 20-pounder to the 105mm gun), two Centurion Armoured Recovery Vehicles (6 then held), 70 Vickers Mark 1 (Al Jahra series) tanks, 38 additional Saladins (70 held), an additional 121 Saracen (10 held), around 21 Ferrets (60 held), two 155mm self-propelled guns on AMX IB ARV chassis, 18 155mm towed howitzers, 18 Oerlikon 35mm anti-aircraft guns and

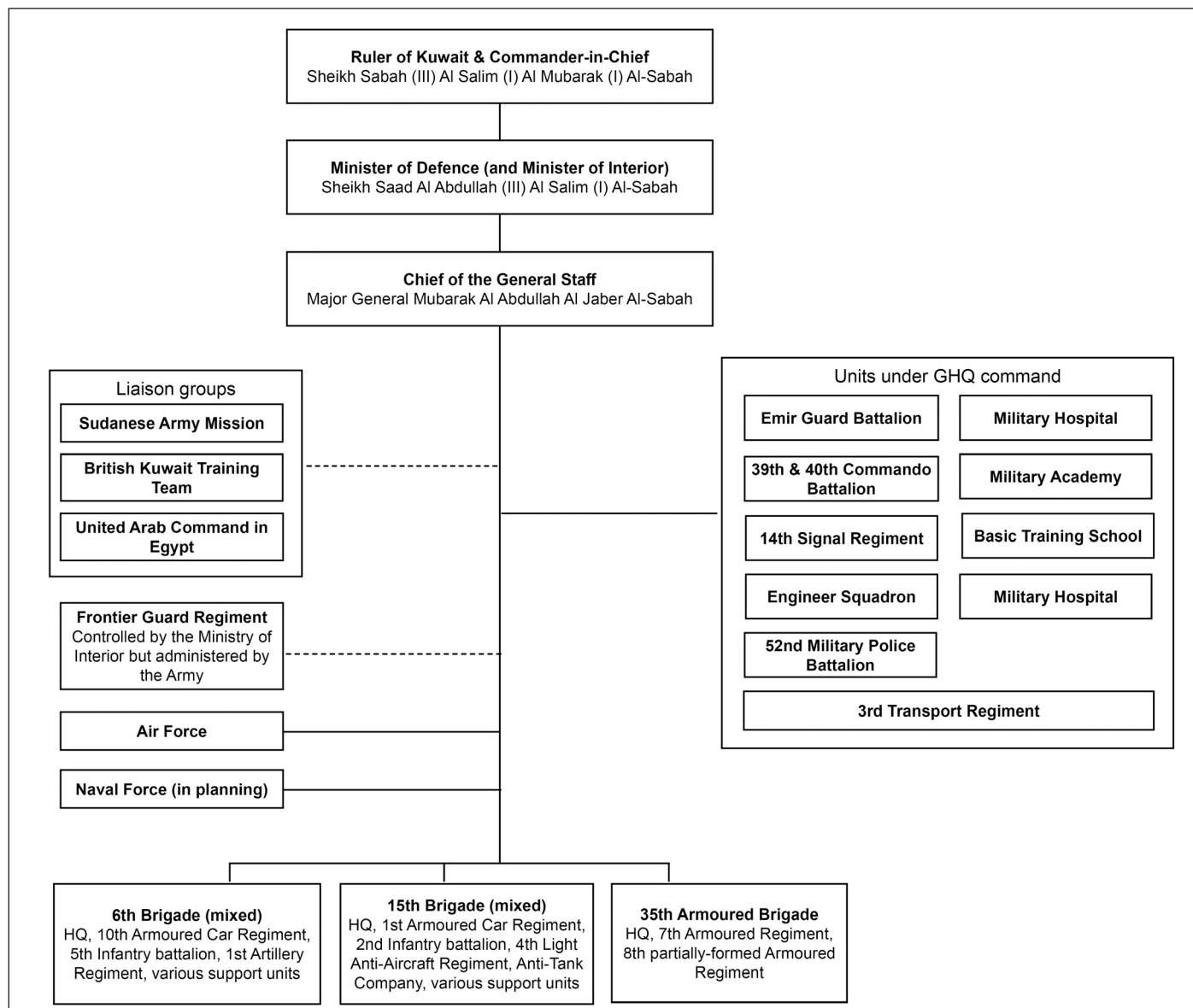


Diagram 7: The structure of the Kuwait Army, early 1970. (Diagram by Athol Yates)

100 Hispano Suiza 20mm anti-aircraft guns. Most of the equipment had arrived by 1971.

An ongoing challenge for the land forces was to maintain a high level of serviceability for its equipment. A British assessment made in April 1970 found that around 30 percent of tanks were serviceable, most of the armoured cars were serviceable but they were seldom used in the field, and the artillery serviceably was poor as they had not been calibrated. A key reason for this was because the Kuwait Armed Forces only had 50 percent of the number of technicians required. Other significant problems included that there was little delegation of responsibilities and decisions were centralised, all of which made decision making slow and sometimes, decisions were not made at all. This organisational culture reflected a combination of the Arab patriarchal system and mistrust between officers and enlisted personnel soldiers, and particularly between Kuwaiti and Bedu members of the armed forces.

As of the late 1960s, most officers were Kuwaitis. While there remained in the military some expatriate Arabs, mainly Palestinians, these generally held positions of no great influence even though they occupied some staff and tactical leadership posts. The older and more senior Kuwaiti officers came from wealthy influential families, and the more junior ones being both Kuwaiti townsmen and Bedu. The enlisted personnel were entirely Bedu, most being

recruited from Saudi tribes. Due to the differences in culture and attitude of the Bedu and Kuwaiti townsmen, there was a noticeable lack of cooperation and respect between the two. The Bedu were by tradition patriarchal and conservative, and looked down upon the townsmen (except for the ruling family) for their modernity, while the townsmen regarded the Bedu as uncouth and violent. The poor relations between the groups meant that Bedu soldiers were inclined only to obey those orders that suited them when they were issued by townsmen officers, and these officers would have little knowledge of the Bedu soldiers under their command. Each group of officers stuck to themselves meaning that there would be little cooperation between Kuwait townsmen and Bedu officers.

Training was improving for both officers and enlisted personnel but was still generally poor. A military college for officer cadets had been established in 1968 and the first batch graduating in 1970. There was little post-cadet officer training, and in the late 1960s no officer in the Kuwait Army had attended a staff college course abroad. There was little or no collective training beyond company level. This further undermined the effectiveness of the military as did the shortage of officers and senior NCOs, and the fact that some of these were only semi-literate. Commanders and staff officers generally lacked knowledge and experience.

Importantly the Kuwait military had no reserves nor a reinforcement scheme, which meant that after the commitment of extant Kuwait military forces, their losses could not be replaced nor forces augmented with additional ones.

The structure of the Kuwait Armed Forces as of early 1970 is seen in Diagram 7. The core combat elements of the 8,000-man military was two mixed brigade groups (6th and 15th Brigades), an armoured brigade (35th Armoured Brigade) and two independent infantry battalions (39th and 40th Commando). Each of the mixed groups consisted of a headquarters, one Armoured Car Regiment and one Infantry Battalion, with various supporting units. Armoured Car Regiments consisted of three sabre squadrons, a motorised/mechanised infantry company and a large maintenance element (known as the Light Aid Detachment detached from the 3rd Transport Regiment) which was capable of undertaking second line repairs. Infantry battalions consisted of three companies, a combined headquarters and heavy infantry weapons company. The 6th Brigade also included the 1st Field Artillery Regiment, which consisted of two battalions of 25-pounders. The 15th Brigade also included both the Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, which consisted of two battalions each of twelve 40mm L70 Bofors guns, and the Anti-Tank Company equipped with Vigilant missiles (213 missiles and 12 controller units), 24 MoBATs and 100 rocket launchers. The armoured brigade consisted of one full armoured regiment which was made up of four squadrons, each of three troops, plus one partially formed regiment.

By 1970, the general staff system had been reorganised more along British lines. This saw the structure under the Chief of Staff consisting of one Deputy Chief of Staff and four Assistant Deputy Chiefs of the General Staff with one each responsible for Operations, Intelligence, Administration and Logistics. All were ranked at brigadier or colonel. The Deputy Chief oversaw the Intelligence Bureau which was responsible for both military intelligence as well as security intelligence focusing on base security and the loyalty of military personnel. Around this time, military intelligence started to become more joint.

GHQ also had several liaison groups, including the Kuwaiti detachment under the Unified Arab Command in Egypt, plus expatriate groups, notably the British Kuwait Liaison Team and Sudanese Army Mission. The Kuwaiti detachment under the Unified Arab Command in Egypt as of 1970 was the ongoing commitment by Kuwait to the defence of Egypt following the Third Arab-Israeli War. After the conflict, the force was reduced to about a battalion-sized group, with three infantry battalions (the 2nd and 5th infantry and the 39th/40th Commando) being rotated through tours relieving each other every two months. The Kuwait positions in 1970 were on the north-east side of Ismailia where the canal enters Lake Timsah.

The British Kuwait Liaison Team by 1970 had grown to some 80 British Army and RAF personnel. Their numbers would increase to over 100 with the deliveries of Vickers tanks between 1970 and 1972, and the new aircraft. As before, the team's role was to provide advice, maintenance and training, with training becoming absolutely essential due to the recent introduction of advanced weaponry. While the team had no operational role during peacetime, due to Britain's defence commitment to Kuwait during conflict, it was envisaged that team members would serve as liaison staff between the Kuwaitis and British, and act as forward air controllers and radar controllers. Another expatriate group in the Kuwaiti Armed Forces was the Sudanese Army Mission. This consisted of one lieutenant colonel and a few NCO instructors at the military college.

GHQ also administered the Frontier Guard Regiment, which was controlled by the Ministry of Interior. A number of units were controlled by GHQ with the most important being the Emiri Guard Battalion which included an Armoured Car Squadron (strength 500), the Signal Regiment (strength 400), the Engineer Squadron (strength 150), the Military Police Battalion (strength 500) and the Commando (strength 500).

The 1973 Military Modernisation

The 1970s saw several reorganisations of the land forces which reflected delivery of new weapons, the evolution of Kuwait's defence doctrine, and experience from the 1973 Sanita border incident and the 1973 Israeli-Arab war. The Sanita incident occurred when in the early hours of 20 March 1973 the Iraqi army attacked a 20-man Kuwait border police post at Sanita on the Iraq-Kuwait border, around 5km west of Umm Qasr. Despite being equipped with just light weapons and vastly outnumbered and outgunned, the Kuwait Police defended the post for several hours. A police lieutenant and corporal were killed, and a number of others injured. The Iraqis justified the attack by claiming that the post was on their territory. In addition, Iraq appears to have moved some 3,000 troops into Kuwaiti territory to the south of Umm Qasr. The Kuwait Armed Forces were mobilised with a screening force of armoured cars, artillery and armoured personnel carriers was positioned in the border area, while armoured units moved into positions six miles south of the frontier. The Kuwait Air Force was placed on full alert with pilots staying beside their aircraft. Tensions were deescalated by Iraq when it agreed to the formation of a joint Iraq and Kuwait commission to demarcate the 100km border. In late 1973, Iraq withdrew its forces from Sanita and Kuwaiti territory south of Umm Qasr. Kuwait reoccupied Sanita police post on 26 April 1973. During the negotiations, Iraq advanced its claims to the Kuwait islands of Warbah and Bubiyan, demonstrating that Iraqi desire for Kuwait territory had not ended.

The incident revealed a number of problems with the Kuwait military including an insufficient number of qualified Kuwaiti pilots to man all the serviceable aircraft at any one time, and a lack of weaponry for land forces. In addition, the stationing of Kuwait



Saladin Mark II armoured cars, 1961. (Albert Grandolini collection)

forces along the Suez Canal meant that a component of land forces were not available for the defence of Kuwait.

The 1973 Israeli-Arab war started in 6 October and ended with a ceasefire on 25 October. During this time the Kuwait brigade group in Egypt was under the command of the 16th Egyptian Division. Just before the Suez Canal assault occurred, the Kuwaiti brigade commander reported to the division's headquarters that Israeli frogmen had crossed the canal. However, this intelligence was not accepted by the Egyptians and no response was taken. The next day the Kuwaiti force was overrun by the Israelis as well as being attacked by Israeli Phantom aircraft. Some 50 members of the brigade died, including the commander, his second-in-command and a number of junior officers. In addition, the force suffered 120 casualties. During the fighting, the brigade was unable to make radio contact with its Egyptian headquarters but had direct radio communication with the Kuwaiti Chief of Staff. Consequently, he personally ordered the Kuwaiti forces to withdraw. Kuwait also sent an armoured brigade group to Syria where it was placed under the Syrian military. Known as the Al Jahra Force, the brigade was equipped with Vickers tanks, 155mm self-propelled guns plus other armoured vehicles, and also included an infantry battalion, company-sized elements of commandos, anti-aircraft guns, mortars, and supporting medical, engineering and signals elements. The brigades in both Egypt and Syria appear to have been withdrawn in 1973 and 1974. The 1973 Israeli-Arab war experience was significant in influencing the weaponry that the Kuwait Armed Forces was to acquire, notably in its anti-aircraft and anti-tank missile systems.

Following the Sanita border incident, the Kuwait government initiated significant military reform. This included a seven-year equipment modernisation program, establishing a navy, and introducing conscription. It took until January 1976 to pass the conscription law which made Kuwait the first of the Gulf Arab states to introduce compulsory service. Conscription started in April 1978 to all Kuwaiti males between the ages of 18 and 30. Conscripts had to serve for 2 years if they did not have a university degree and one year for those who did. The late 1970s saw about 5,000 Kuwaitis called up each year. After the completion of their service, they become part of the military reserves and returned for duty for one month per year. In 1981, around 5 percent of those who completed their service joined the regular armed forces.

For the land forces, it acquired a larger amount of new equipment. New infantry weapons obtained included FN rifles, General Purpose Machine Guns, and Carl Gustav 8.4cm recoilless rifles. Mechanised minelayers were purchased, probably four L9 bar mine minelayers with 20,000 bar mines or four Mark III minelayers with 26,000 Mark VII anti-tank mines. In 1975, eight AMX-Mark-F3 155mm self-propelled guns were received, and orders placed for 143 Chieftain Mark 5 which arrived in 1978 and 1979. Some 3,150 BGM-71 TOW missiles were received between 1974 and 1980, plus anti-aircraft weapons (see 'Ground-based air defence' below). Other equipment included six M109A1 155mm turreted self-propelled howitzers (arrived 1980), and three Cymbeline mortar locating radars (ordered 1980).

While most of the equipment Kuwait purchased before 1973 came from Britain, after this time most came from France, the US and the Soviet Union. In 1974, Kuwait bought 32 Mirage fighter aircraft from France and the following year, 36 A4 Skyhawks from the US. In 1976, Kuwait agreed to purchase some US\$400 million worth of Soviet arms. This, and subsequent Soviet purchases in the 1970s, included Frog-7 (Luna) surface-to-surface missiles, and SA-6 (Gainful) and SA-7 (Grail) surface-to-air missiles. Reasons

for the Soviet purchases included that it diversified Kuwait's source of weaponry, Kuwait's leaders hoped it would soften future Iraqi attitudes towards Kuwait as Iraq had signed a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union in 1972, it projected Kuwait's non-aligned status, and it signalled its displeasure with Western support for Israel. While Kuwait was willing to buy Soviet weapons, it did not want to expose its personnel to Soviet instructors for fear of subversion. Arrangements were made with Syria and Egypt in 1977 for them to provide trainers for Soviet equipment.

By 1980, the land force's combat elements were organised into three brigades – one armoured, one mechanised infantry and one combat support. In the event of a ground invasion, the armoured brigade and the combat support brigade (which included artillery and the newly acquired Frog-7 surface-to-surface missile units) would defend the Al Mutla Ridge, immediately to the north of Al Jahra. To cover deployment to the Al Mutla defensive position, a screen of armoured cars and mechanised infantry would be based on the frontier and the intermediate position of the Al Liah Ridge some 20km north-west of the Al Mutla Ridge. The mechanised infantry brigade, located south of the capital, would defend the coastline or provide reinforcements to the Al Jahra area, depending on the threat. The land forces in 1980 made up 10,000 of the total armed forces of 12,400. The next largest was the Air Force and Air Defence at 1,900, followed by the Navy at 500.

By 1980, an estimated one-third to one-half of the Kuwaiti armed forces were either from Iraqi or were Saudi Bedu. While not holding Kuwaiti citizenship, they had proved their reliability having participated in military campaigns at the Suez Canal front in 1967 and 1973, at the Golan front in 1973, and defended Kuwait territory in 1973 during the Sanita border incident. Some had died in these operations, in which case they were awarded Kuwaiti citizenship posthumously which was extended to their immediate families. In 1981, non-Kuwaiti security personnel would be eligible for naturalisation after serving 20 years.

Kuwait Air Force

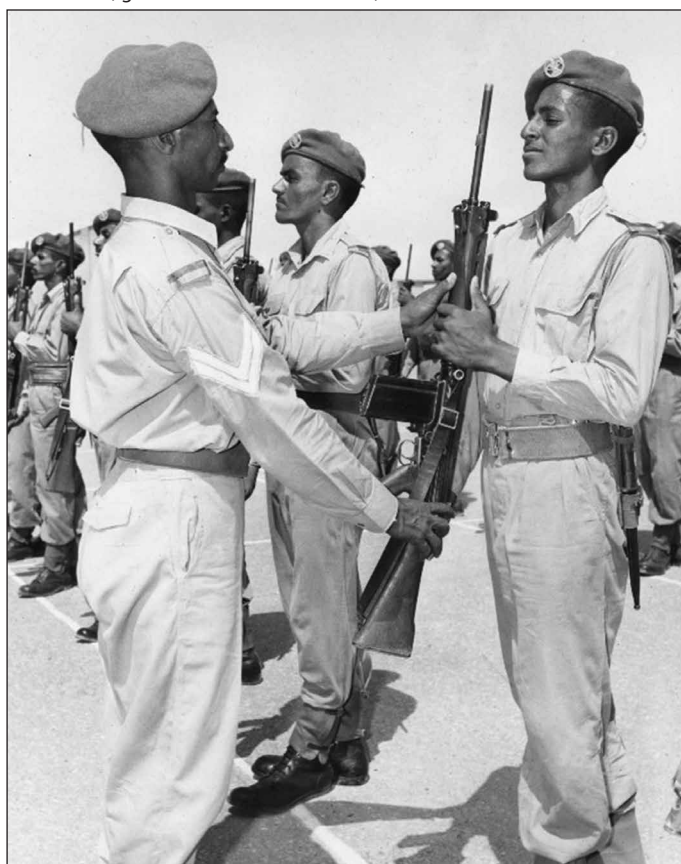
The origin of the Kuwait Air Force dates to the early 1950s when the Chairman of the Public Security Department sponsored the formation of the Kuwait Flying Club. The club was seen as a discrete way to train pilots and obtain aircraft without actually establishing an air force. The club was formally inaugurated in March 1954, and then had three second-hand British Auster trainers. Local training led to pilots receiving British private pilot licenses with the opportunity to go to Britain for advanced training, notably to obtain commercial pilot licenses. By the end of 1954, the club had three Auster Autocrat and five or six Auster J/5 Aiglet Trainers.

The military nature of the club was visible from its early days where trainee pilots wore a uniform modelled on that of the RAF. The initial cadre of the club's pilots were not drawn from the Directorate of Public Security's Security or Frontier Force but instead from the Directorate's Passport Office. This was likely to have been because the Passport Office, who was directly overseen by the head of the Directorate's secretary, Hani Qadumi, employed individuals who were considered as more trusted and loyal, and known. In addition to training, the club's aircraft were used for reconnaissance. In 1954 and 1955, the club received three light transport aircraft – two de Havilland DH.104 Doves and one de Havilland DH.114 Heron. These were used for both air observation and transport.

In 1963, the club was renamed the Kuwait Air Force. In the lead up to its establishment, its head changed from a Briton to Kuwaiti. The last head of the club, in effect the Officer Commanding, was the



British Kuwait Liaison Team RSM J.B. Finnie, Scots Guards, gives a command to a squad of Kuwaiti soldiers, 1962. Although the team members were serving British Army members, they wore Kuwaiti uniforms including the standard Kuwait headdress badge. From the 1960s, the red and white *shemagh* with black *agal* were generally only worn for parades with berets being worn otherwise. Berets were initially either khaki or black for armour. As the military expanded, additional colours were introduced: commando green for commandos, red for military police, maroon for Emiri Guard, green for the National Guard, and dark blue for air and naval forces. (*Soldier Magazine*)



Kuwaiti NCO corrects the SLR position at 'Present Arms', 1962. He is wearing 1937 Pattern webbing, and work dress which consisted of khaki shirt and trousers with black boots for other ranks and desert boots for officers. British style battle dress was worn in cooler weather. (*Soldier Magazine*)

retired RAF Squadron Leader C.J. (Colin) Woodward, who was also the club's chief flying instructor. In the first half of 1962, command passed to the Kuwaiti, Major Mazuk.

While the unique uniforms of the Kuwait Air Force created the impression it was an independent service, the head of the Air Force had little authority to make decisions without referring to the General Staff. The internal structure of the Air Force was similar to that of the Army in the 1960s and would eventually become based on five branches – personnel, intelligence, operations/training, technical/supply and pay. In the 1960s and well into the 1970s, the branch of intelligence was handled by the Army.

In 1960, four Westland Whirlwind HAR-3 helicopters arrived. Following the 1961 tensions with Iraq, Kuwait recognised it needed ground attack and air defence aircraft. In 1962, the force received six BAC Jet Provost T.Mk 51 trainers. The Provosts could be armed with two .303 machine

guns and either six 60lb rockets or four 60lb rockets and 25lb anti-personnel bombs. By this time, its fixed-wing transport and observation aircraft consisted of two de Havilland Canada DHC4 Caribou, six Austers, two Doves and one Heron. The pilots of the Provosts were Kuwaitis with the other aircraft piloted by British civilians from Short Brothers on contract to the Kuwait government.

Between 1964 and 1965, Kuwait received five refurbished and upgraded Hawker Hunters. These were second-hand Dutch and Belgian aircraft sold back to UK, and rebuilt as three FGA.Mk 57s (FGA.Mk 9 standard) and two T.Mk 67s (T.Mk 66 standard) trainers. The numbers of Hunters would grow and by 1974, nine were operational. Two additional Caribous transports also arrived in 1965 and 1966.

The 1968 study of Kuwait's defence needs undertaken by Britain identified that the key air threat to the state was from Iraq. It had the capability to attack with up to 70 aircraft of both light/medium bombers and day fighter/ground attack aircraft. The study recommended creating an air defence system based on air defence fighters, ground-to-air weapons, early warning systems and a networked air defence command and control. For the air defence fighters, Kuwait ordered 14 English Electric Lightning jets, of which 12 were F.Mk 53 single-seat interceptors and two T.Mk 55 dual-seat conversion trainers with combat capability. These started to arrive in late 1968. The Lightnings carried both de Havilland's Firestreak passive infrared homing air-to-air missile, and the more advanced Hawker Siddeley Red Top air-to-air missile. Kuwait also decided to create a second squadron of combined air defence and ground attack aircraft, in addition to the existing Hunter squadron. However, it would not be until 1974 that they selected which aircraft to purchase. This was the McDonnell-Douglas A-4M Skyhawk II, and 36 of these were received between 1977 and 1978. The Skyhawks' air defence capabilities rested on AIM-9D Sidewinder short-range air-to-air missiles. The air defence plan called for 10 troops of surface-



Army HQ Military Police detachment outside Al Jaiwan Camp, 1962. The bugler has a red and white chequered shemagh. (*Soldier Magazine*)



Sergeant Dave Macey, Coldstream Guards, instructing Kuwaiti commando member on the Bren gun, 1962. British 1937 Pattern webbing is worn over Egyptian camouflage uniform. (*Soldier Magazine*)

to-air missiles which would provide low level defence of key points and deployed forces. The 10 troops would have six fire control units. Early warning and air defence control was to be provided by a new single radar with an associated height-finder sited on the Al Mutla Ridge, in addition to the existing radars at the Air Force's airbase at Kuwait International Airport, and a new mobile radar deployed near the Iraqi border to provide extra early warning of impending low level attack. Radar coverage of Kuwait then consisted of a civil Marconi 264 ATC surveillance radar and associated with it was a military 244 height-finder and display equipment. Air operations were to be conducted through a proposed Joint Operations Centre,

which required good ground/air communications, point to point and tele scrambled lines. To provide aircraft dispersal and redundancy, a second airbase was needed in the country's south.

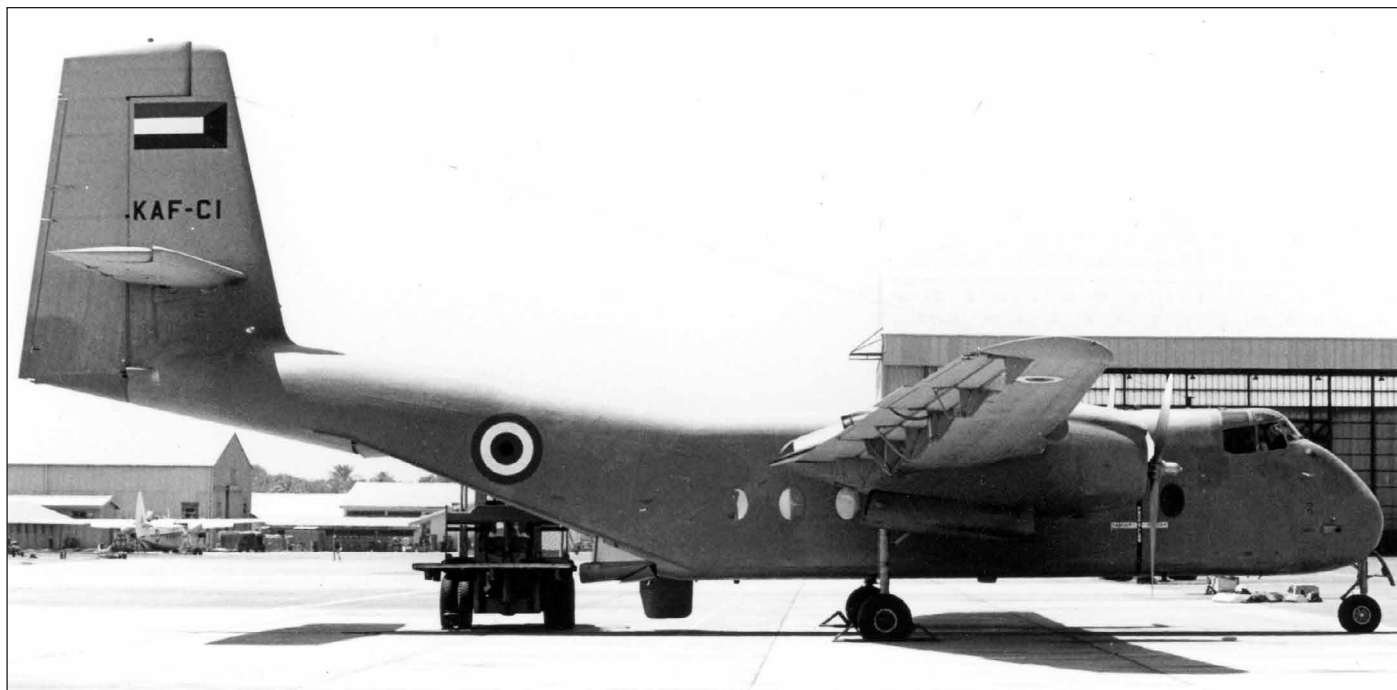
The introduction of the Lightning proved challenging due to a shortage of supporting equipment, spares, pilots and technicians. As the Ministry of Defence policy was to only send Kuwaitis on training courses, and as many of the Air Force's NCOs were expatriates, notably Palestinians and Jordanians, the pool of personnel to undertake specialist technical courses was small. To provide technical support in the short to medium term, at the end of 1971, Britain provided 36 RAF senior NCOs. Maintenance for other aircraft was contracted by Kuwait to the Pakistan Air Force. In early 1970, Pakistani technicians numbered around 100 and this grew to 340 by 1972. Aircraft maintenance was also supported by expatriate civilian technicians, such as 25 Britons in 1970.

Aircraft ordered in the late 1960s included three Agusta-Bell AB.205 and three Bell 206A light helicopters with these arriving between 1968 and 1970, one Armstrong-Whitworth Argosy and two Lockheed L-100 Hercules delivered in 1971, and 23 BAC Jet Provosts, with six arriving in 1970. The Jet Provosts were used for training, although some officer cadets were also sent to Pakistan for training. Those who completed the training went to the Hunter squadron, with the best

between the qualified going on to the Lightnings.

The mid-1970s saw the Air Force introduce around 20 Aérospatiale SA-342 Gazelle light helicopters delivered between 1975 and 1976, four SA-341 Gazelle light helicopters delivered in 1974, and 12 Aérospatiale SA.330 Puma helicopters delivered between 1975 and 1976. To improve ground attack capabilities, HOT anti-tank missiles were delivered for the SA.342L helicopters between 1975 and 1977. Four of the Aérospatiale Gazelle were passed onto the Police Air Wing.

Another consequence of the conflicts in 1973 was to prompt the government to obtain its first multi-role air defence, strike and



A Kuwait Air Force DHC4 Caribou transport aircraft. (Albert Grandolini collection)



A Kuwait Air Force Jet Provost trainer aircraft. (Albert Grandolini collection)

reconnaissance aircraft. The key contenders were the SEPECAT Jaguar, McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II, Northrop F-5E Tiger II, and Dassault Mirage F.1. In 1973, Kuwait selected the Mirage F.1C. Some 27 Mirage F.1CK single-seat interceptors and six F.1BK two-seat conversion trainers were delivered over 1976 and 1977, equipped with Matra R.550 Magic short-range air-to-air missile, which were augmented in 1980 with the improved Super 530F beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile.

By 1980, the Air Force's aircraft squadrons consisted of a fighter squadron (Mirages), a ground attack squadron (Skyhawks), two helicopter squadrons (AB-204s, AB-205s, Gazelles and Pumas), two transport squadrons (McDonnell Douglas DC-9s, DHC4s, and Hercules) and a training squadron (Jet Provosts). All of the fighter pilots were Kuwaitis, with vast majority of aircraft maintenance remained being undertaken by expatriates, primarily Pakistani. Key deficiencies of the force at this time included that the Mirages lacked Identification Friend or Foe equipment, the Skyhawks lacked an all-weather capability, there was a shortage of trained pilots, and only having two combat airbases hindered the ability of the Air Force to sustain combat operations. The combat bases were Ali Al Salem

in northern Kuwait and Ahmed Al Jaber in southern Kuwait. Air force headquarters was located at the military airbase next to the Kuwait International Airport, which also functioned as a support base.

Ground-based Air Defence

Kuwait introduced a ground-based air defence capability in 1962 when it ordered six Bofors L70 40mm light anti-aircraft guns coupled with two Super Fledermaus fire control sets. By 1970, the Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment had

been established which consisted of two batteries, each of nine Bofors L70 and four Super Fledermaus. One battery was deployed permanently to protect the air force base at Kuwait International Airport. Fire control then consisted of three No.4 Mark 7 radars and 11 Fledermaus fire control systems. Air defence capability increased in 1970, when the first of 100 Hispano Suiza 20mm and 18 Oerlikon 35mm anti-aircraft guns arrived. Kuwait obtained surface-to-air missile capability with the introduction of around five I-Hawk systems in 1977 and 1978. Starting in 1979, it also started to receive shipments of the short-range, hand-held Soviet Strela-2 (SA-7 Grail) SAMs, and possibly up to 10 SA-6 Gainful SAM systems. While the I-Hawks provide area coverage, the SA-7s and anti-aircraft guns only provided limited point defence. The I-Hawk batteries relied on US contractors for maintenance and even by the early 1980s, were only about 30 percent operational. The effectiveness of the batteries was further undermined by poorly trained crews.

Up to 1979, ground-based air defence was a component of the Army. That year it was transferred to the Kuwait Air Force, with this service being renamed the Kuwait Air Force and Air Defence. By 1980, the Air Defence Brigade consisted of four batteries (27

launchers) of I-Hawk, a battalion of SA-7, and a battalion of towed Hispano Suiza 20mm and Oerlikon 35mm guns. The strength of the Kuwait Air Force and Air Defence in 1980 was around 2,000 men.

Kuwait Navy

By the start of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980, Kuwait was the only Gulf Arab state which did not have combat vessels in its navy. At that time, Kuwait's largest naval vessels were just landing craft despite the first Ministry of Defence plan for a navy being produced in 1966. The slow pace of development reflected the lack of importance given to naval defence until the Iran-Iraq War started.

The 1966 plan was produced by Commander Peyton-Jones, a retired RN officer. He recommended establishing over five years a small coastal force of six fast patrol boats, nominally Brave-class motor torpedo boats, with an establishment strength of 30 officers, 190 ratings and 10 civilians. This plan was not implemented.

In early 1968, the Chief of the General Staff became increasingly concerned about the naval threat from Iran and reconsidered the need for a navy. He asked the UK Ministry of Defence to propose a plan for the establishment of a Kuwait navy. The plan delivered in June 1968 recommended that Kuwait's navy should have two priority roles: (1) countering hostile naval forces that could attack or land on the coastline of Kuwait or seize disputed islands, and (2) preventing or countering the mining of Kuwaiti waters. The navy would also be expected to undertake a range of supporting roles including transporting troops, stopping the illegal landing of migrants and goods, undertaking search and rescue operations, and participating in naval diplomacy such as through courtesy visits to neighbouring countries. The plan noted that attacking vessels would probably include both missile boats (e.g. the Soviet Komar-class small missile boats and the larger Osa-class missile boat which were starting to be sold across the Middle East) and conventional naval forces, notably

frigates and destroyers. The plan recommended Vosper 110ft patrol boats fitted with Italian Sea Killer anti-ship missiles as these would be effective against both types of vessels. This stood in contrast to Brave-class motor torpedo boats which would be ineffective against missile boats. The 1968 plan recognised that it was not practical to build a navy with more counter-mine vessels given Kuwait's limited manpower, skills and financial resources. The plan did, however, recommend obtaining two large landing craft plus building a naval base with a jetty, slipway, workshops, and fuel and ammunition storage. It envisaged the navy having a strength of 210 officers and men, of which some 50 to 60 would be expatriate officers and senior ratings who would stand up and support the force in its early years.

No decision was made on implementing the plan, although in a sign of commitment by the Minister of Defence to establish a naval force, in 1968 the Kuwait Navy was formally established. The only craft ordered in the late 1960s were two 27m Vosper Thornycroft-type landing craft (*Waheed* and *Fareed*). Another of this type of vessel arrived in 1975.

Following the crises in 1973, the Kuwait Defence Council finally approved the formation of a navy with a suitable budget. Its key elements were (1) naval base, (2) five 150ft fast patrol boats with surface-to-surface missiles, (3) 10 mine countermeasures vessels, (4) shore-based missile batteries, (5) marines, and (6) hovercraft. In the following year, work started on selecting the site for a naval base, and a handful of Kuwaiti junior officers, officer cadets and ratings were sent to the UK for English language and naval training. An agreement was reached with Pakistan which provided experts to help build the navy. The location of the base was selected as Ras al-Qulayah (now known as the Mohammed Ahmad Naval Base), and construction of it started in 1977, finishing around 1980. However, little progress was made in actually obtaining vessels. The only vessels to arrive in the late 1970s were three Vosper-type 32m

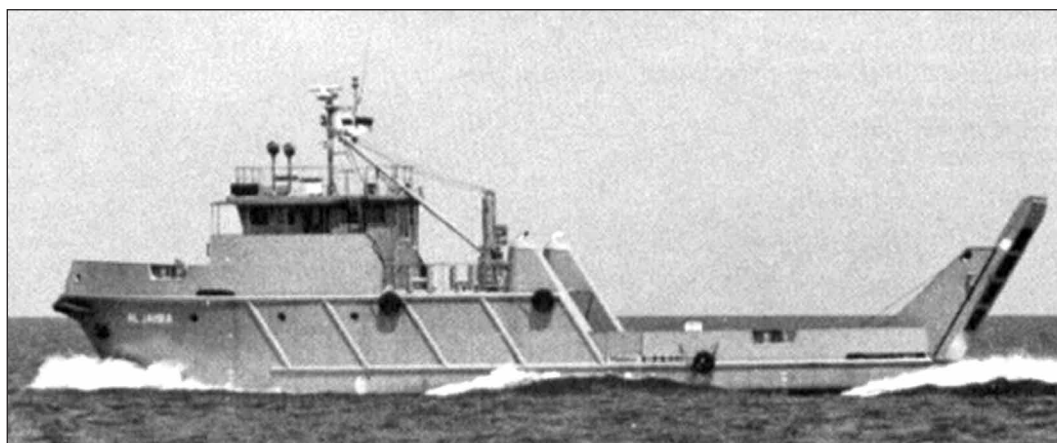
logistics landing craft (*Hadiya*, *Ceriff* and *Al Jahra*, delivered in 1979).

The start of the Iran-Iraq War in September 1980 saw Kuwait reassess its naval requirements, and particularly the need for combat vessels. At that time, its establishment strength was around 600 men, which included numbers of Pakistani naval personnel and other expatriates who filled mainly technical billets due to the shortage of qualified Kuwaitis. Despite the 1974 plan, the Kuwait Navy still had no mine countermeasure vessels, shore-based missile batteries, marines nor hovercraft. It also lacked a coastal radar network and a command, control and communications network capable of ensuring prompt detection and response to infiltration.

As Kuwait supported Iraq at the start of the war, Kuwait was concerned about Iran's



Waheed, the first of three 27m, 170-ton full displacement landing craft, 1974. (Ivan Gogin, Navypedia)



Al Jahra, the third of the Hadiya-class 32m, 320-ton full displacement landing craft. (Ivan Gogin, Navypedia)

response. The Iranian naval threats considered the most likely were attacks against Kuwait's merchant ships by Iranian vessels (i.e. conventional naval vessels, missile boats and small boats), and night-time infiltration by irregulars in small boats or commandos attacking offshore facilities. This led Kuwait to place an order in 1980 for six German Lurssen TNC 45-type fast missile attack craft. These were 42/45m, 228t displacement vessels equipped with four MM40 Exocet SSM, one 76mm/62 DP OTO Melara, and two 40mm/70 Breda-Bofors Compatto guns. These were fitted with Racal/Decca Cutlass Electronic Warfare systems which gave the navy for the first time both ELINT and jamming capability. These craft would arrive between 1982 and 1984. Known as the *Weija*-class initially, after 1983 they were renamed the *Al Boom*-class and given different names and numbers. The vessels were *Weija* K451/*Al Boom* P4501, *Mashuwah* K452/*Al Betteel* P4503, *Jalboot* K453/*Al Sanbouk* P4505, *Istiqlal* K455/*Al Saadi* P4507, *Al Abdali*/*Al Mubareki* P4511, and *Al Ahmadi* P4509.

Kuwait National Guard

The Kuwaiti National Guard was formally established in June 1967 as a direct result of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. It was conceived initially to be a cross between a military reserve and a home guard force. Its first commander was Sheikh Salim Al Ali Al Salim (I) Al-Sabah. The National Guard was independent of the Kuwait Armed Forces, and its commander, who was to be headed by a member of the ruling family, reported directly to the Minister of Defence.

Following the National Guard's formation, little happened until it obtained a budget the following year. Recruitment started in June 1968 and involved volunteers enlisting with their district *mukhtar* (head). The vast majority of those who joined were Bedu. The first batch of National Guard passed out in October 1970, but of the 700 recruits some 300 left rapidly as they became disenchanted. The size of the National Guard appears to have remained small in the early 1970s. In this period, the National Guard had two key functions: guarding and surveillance duties on the border and at the oil fields, and internal security functions in inland rural areas. However, it would also act as a reserve not only for the regular forces and but also the police. In times of war or emergency, the National Guard would have rear area security responsibilities, notably guarding important government buildings and infrastructure. The 1973 Sanita border incident drove the Ministry of Defence to modernise and expand what was then a very small, under-trained and ill-equipped National Guard. Around 1977, the National Guard started providing military training to Kuwaiti secondary students.

By 1980, the National Guard was divided into two parts. One was the active units which were those on active duty. The other was the reserves which was made up of retired regular forces personnel or those who had completed their national service. In 1980, the National Guard was estimated to be around 6,000 men, of which around 2,000 were in active units.

3

QATAR

The state of Qatar consists of a peninsula about 160km in length and between 55 and 90km in width, plus a small number of islands of which all but one – Halal Island – is close to the peninsula's shoreline. The state has a 60km-long border with Saudi Arabia between Dohat Salwa (Bay of Salwa) and Khor Al Udayd (Al Udayd inlet). It also has maritime borders with Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Iran and the UAE.

Defining Qatar's borders has long been a source of tension with neighbouring states. Qatar has historically had land borders with Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi. In the 1950s, Britain unilaterally declared the location of Qatar's land border. However, the failure to actually survey the border and the fact that both Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi did not accept Britain's decision meant that the land border and the corresponding maritime borders remained unsettled. Abu Dhabi argued that it had traditional ownership over the eastern Khor Al Udayd area and several islands off Qatar's east coast, notably Dayyinah and Shuraawa islands. Tensions between Abu Dhabi police and Qatari forces in the area escalated in 1958–59 with shots being exchanged. This occurred again in 1968 when Qatari police fired on an Abu Dhabi launch in Khor Al Udayd after it failed to stop, killing one person. In 1974, Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia signed the Treaty of Jeddah which saw the UAE shift its border about 25km eastwards in return for Saudi Arabia ending its claims to other parts of Abu Dhabi. Thus, Abu Dhabi no longer shares a land border with Qatar. Despite the 1974 agreement, Saudi Arabia continued to contest the border and the most significant violent confrontation over the border occurred in 1992 when at least two Qatari soldiers died. In 2001, Qatar and Saudi Arabia signed a treaty which finally formalised the border.

Another area of the Qatar Peninsula where ownership was contested was the Zubarah region in the north-west of the peninsula. This region had in the 1800s and the early decades of the 1900s been visited regularly by Bahraini rulers for recreation and was used by Bahrain's Naim tribe for grazing, with the tacit agreement of Qatar's sheikhs. In 1937, following a dispute within the Naim tribe at Zubarah, the ruler of Qatar intervened on behalf of one faction of the Niam and the ruler of Bahrain intervened on behalf of the other. Both rulers claimed ownership over Zubarah. The ruler of Bahrain imposed a blockade on Qatar to put pressure on the Qatari ruler, while the latter ordered that a new fort be built at Zubarah to demonstrate his ownership over the region. In 1944, Britain obtained agreement from both rulers to restore friendly arrangements with Bahrain lifting the blockade and Qatar abandoning the fort. However, this did not lead to a permanent settlement. In February 1953, a party of Bahrain school children with their schoolmasters arrived unannounced in Zubarah and inscribed 'Al Bahrain' in large letters on the walls of the fort. Maps printed in Bahrain showed Zubarah as Bahraini territory which further inflamed the Qataris. Consequently, the Qatari ruler ordered that the fort be reoccupied in 1953 and in 1956, ordered his police who were living in tents nearby to move permanently into the fort. Bahrain continued to dispute Qatari sovereignty over Zubarah until 2001 when a ruling by the International Court of Justice settled ownership of the region in favour of Qatar.

To the east, west and north of the peninsula are small numbers of islands. The Hawar Island archipelago off Qatar's west coast contains the largest of these islands. Both Bahrain and Qatar claimed sovereignty over various islands in this group, with Bahrain reinforcing its claim to the island of Hawar by building a police fort there in 1939. In 1947 a sea-bed boundary between Bahrain and Qatar was established although it continued to be contested. A 2001 International Court of Justice ruling finally settled the ownership issues and gave both Bahrain and Qatar parts of the Hawar archipelago. Disagreements over the ownership of the islands to the east of Qatar were mostly settled in the late 1960s with Dayyinah now being owned by Abu Dhabi and Shuraawa by Qatar. The most important of Qatar's islands today is Halul Island. It is about 90km northeast of Doha and starting in the mid-1950s, the barren 1.5km²

Table 7: Rulers of Qatar		
Dates of reign	Ruler*	Years of birth and death
18 December 1878–17 July 1913	Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed Al Thani	1825–1913
17 July 1913–20 August 1949 (Abdicated)	Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani	1880–1957
20 August 1949–24 October 1960 (Abdicated)	Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah Al Thani	1895–1974
24 October 1960–3 September 1972 (Deposed)	Sheikh Ahmed bin Ali Al Thani	1922–1977
22 February 1972–27 June 1995 (Deposed)	Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani	1930–2016
* The official title of the rulers to 2 September 1971 was <i>hakim</i> (ruler), and from 3 September 1971 his title became <i>emir</i> .		

Table 8: Security Force Leadership		
Dates	Name	Appointment
1949–1961	Ronald Cochrane	Commandant, Qatar Police
1961–1972	Ronald Cochrane/Muhammad Mahdi Quaid Al Aam*	Head of the Public Security Department
1961–1972	R.G. (Ron) Lock	Police Commander
1950s–72	Mohamed Abdullah Al Atiyah	Superintendent of Police, Commander Emiri (Royal) Guard Regiment, Commander, Qatar Security Force
1972–	Mohamed Abdullah Al Atiyah	Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Qatar Armed Forces
Late 1960s–1972	Qasim bin Ali bin Abdullah Al Thani	Political head of the Qatar Security Force
1972–89	Khalid bin Hamad bin Abdullah Al Thani	Minister of Interior
1972–	Hamad bin Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani	Chief of Staff 1972–73, Commander-in-Chief 1973–95, Minister of Defence 1977–95
* Cochrane converted to Islam and adopted the new name.		

island has grown to become a key hydrocarbon storage area and loading terminal. Militarily, the island is significant, as it houses one of two bases for Qatari naval forces, with the other being in Doha.

Qatar has a desert climate with an average annual rainfall of less than 70mm and little drinkable groundwater. The peninsula's dry interior meant that it could not support agriculture or permanent settlements. Nomadic tribes from Saudi Arabia occasionally camped there when they moved their camel herds in search of vegetation. Historically, settlements on Qatar were invariably on the coast as the sea provided food and income, principally through fishing and pearling. These settlements were often little more than small clan groups, and their existence could be transient. If the clan thought there were better conditions elsewhere in the Gulf, or if it had a significant dispute with a neighbouring group or prominent sheikh, the village could simply pack up its belongings and leave by sea or camel.

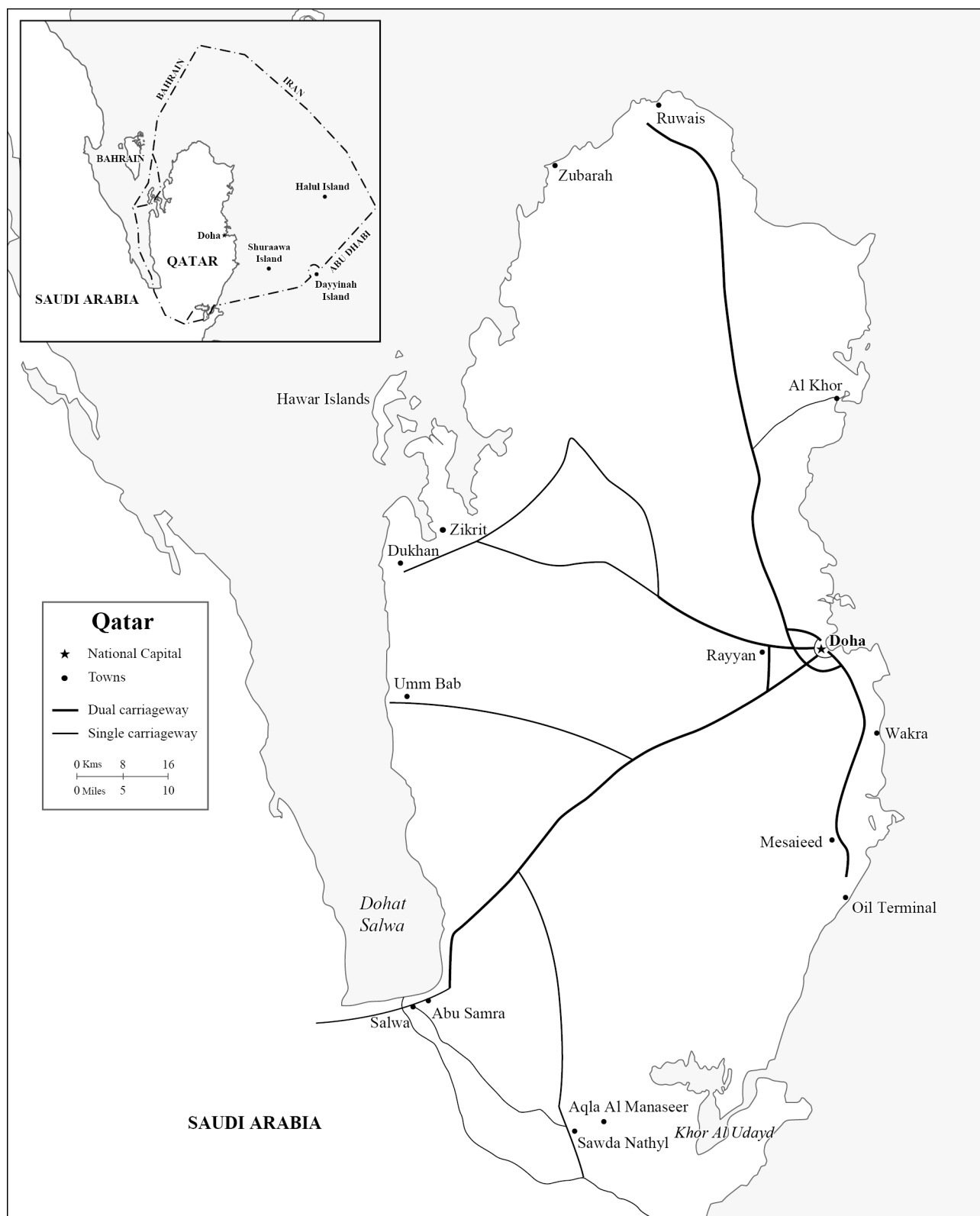
Pre-oil, Qatar had a very small population. This reflected not only the lack of water and agriculture but also because it had little trade. As Qatar was off the main sea and land trade routes between the east and west of the Gulf, it never had an entrepôt port as did Bahrain, Dubai, Sharjah and Kuwait. At the start of the 1900s, Qatar had only around 27,000 inhabitants. Qatar's population varied significantly with economic conditions, and when pearling collapsed in the 1930s, coupled with the global depression, many left for better opportunities in Bahrain, Hasa and beyond. The population continued to decline during the Second World War, resulting in Qatar having between 12,000 and 16,000 inhabitants in 1948.

The demographic makeup of Qatar's pre-oil population was somewhat homogenous for, unlike in Bahrain and Kuwait, Qatar did not attract agricultural workers and traders from Persia, India etc. The vast majority of the population of Qatar were Sunni Arabs, being either settled or Bedu from what is today the Eastern Province

of Saudi Arabia. While there were some Shia, Persians and people from south-west Asia, they were few in number. Another difference between Qatar and both Bahrain and Kuwait was that the limited trade that existed in Qatar was controlled by members of the ruling family, rather than merchant families. As such, politics and trade were intertwined in Qatar. This would continually cause difficulties for the Qatari rulers as members of the large ruling family would engage in politics as a means of increasing their wealth and power.

The political structure in Qatar at the start the 1900s was characterised by a ruler who lacked centralised authority over the peninsula. At this time, Qatar's population was largely located in the villages of Doha and Wakra. The ruler had limited influence over populations outside of these villages, and particularly over both the transient coastal settlements and the Bedu who travelled onto and off the peninsula. The ruler had limited financial means to either buy allegiance through a civil list or tribal payments, or maintain large numbers of armed retainers to enforce his rule. His main source of income was taxes on pearling boats and customs duty, plus income from his own commercial activities.

The ruling family of Qatar had long been the Al Thani family. At the turn of the twentieth century, the ruler was Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammad Al Thani. He is seen today as the founding father of modern Qatar. Sheikh Jassim had two brothers, Ahmed and Jaber, both of whose descendant lines (bani Ahmed and bani Jaber respectively), have played significant roles in inter-family politics across the twentieth century and to the present day. One common strategy used by family factions to advance their interests was to seek the rulership, thus given them power and money, and the ability to distribute largesse and reward their followers. Another strategy was to pressure the ruler to increase their allowances, to add their relatives and followers to the civil list, and to obtain an exemption from tax and customs. To achieve these strategies,



Qatar, 1980. (Map by Athol Yates)

factions would seek to mobilise supporters or take direct action. Such actions ranged from lobbying in *majalis* to small protests, and from orchestrating street demonstrations to assassination attempts. Inter-family disputes played a direct role in the abdications of rulers in 1949 and 1960 and the depositions of rulers in 1972 and 1995. A common element in these changes was a shifting of power across descendant lines.

For the rulers, the threat from inter-family disputes was a key driver in deciding the roles, weaponry and leaders of their security forces. Another important driver was hydrocarbons. This was

because this resource changed the wealth of the ruler and the state, increased interest from foreign states in Qatar, and resulted in a radical shift in the demographics of Qatar, all of which would have significant security implications.

The history of hydrocarbons in Qatar starts in 1933 when negotiations over exploration concessions commenced. Deciding to whom the ruler would award concessions had geopolitical implications. The ruler of Saudi Arabia wanted them to be given to his oil partner, the Standard Oil Company of California, while Britain wanted them for a British company. At that time, the ruler

of Qatar was concerned over the threat posed by Saudi Arabia and so used the granting of concessions to a British company as a way to obtain a commitment from Britain that it would protect Qatar from landside aggression. This was an extension of Britain's commitment from earlier in the century where it agreed to defend Qatar from maritime attacks. Britain's new landside security guarantee had limitations – it only applied to unprovoked attacks which were serious and came from external sources, as distinct from tribal or banditry raids. Defending Qatar from internal threats was the responsibility of the ruler. In the case of an external land attack, the most likely threat was from lightly armed, mounted/motorised tribal forces from Saudi Arabia. Britain's concept of operation to defend Qatar from such an attack was to use ground attack aircraft rather than ground forces. This reflected both a belief in the effectiveness of aircraft and the difficulty of landing and sustaining troops.

In 1935, the ruler signed a 75-year concession agreement with Anglo-Persian Oil Company. This concession was then transferred to Petroleum Development (Qatar), which was renamed the Qatar Petroleum Company in 1953. By 1938, exploration drilling was underway at Dukhan with the oil company building a jetty at Zikrit to import heavy equipment and supplies, as well as constructing an aircraft landing ground and a headquarters camp at Dukhan, plus a labour camp at Umm Bab.

Oil was discovered at Dukhan in 1939, and by January 1940 Qatar was producing over 4,000 barrels of oil per day. Due to the Axis threat, in 1942 the Dukhan wells and installations were stripped or destroyed, with operations only restarting in late 1947. More wells were drilled in the late 1940s, and a 120km pipeline was constructed to carry oil from the Dukhan field to the port of Mesaieed (previously named Umm Said), where a jetty, oil terminals and subsequently refineries were built. The first shipment of Dukhan crude left Mesaieed in December 1949. The 1950s and 1960s saw a massive increase in oil exports from the peninsula, and due to the low cost of extraction, it was highly profitable.

Offshore exploration in Qatar dates to 1949 when a concession was granted to a subsidiary of the US-based Superior Oil Company and Investment Corporation. However, it would only be in 1960 that oil was found at the Idd al-Sharqi oil and gas field, some 85km east of Doha, followed by another discovery in 1963 at the Maydan Mahzam field. Hydrocarbons from these offshore fields were piped to Halul Island, on which pumping stations and loading terminals were constructed. The first shipment of oil from Halul occurred in February 1964. Some of Qatar's hydrocarbon fields lie across national boundaries, which means Qatar shares field development with other nations. An example is the Al Bunduq field which Qatar and Abu Dhabi agreed to jointly exploit in 1969.

The scale of Qatar's hydrocarbon resources is enormous. Today Qatar is estimated to have 1.5 percent of the world's oil reserves, and some 14 percent of the world's natural gas reserves. With the export of hydrocarbon, the revenue to the ruler increased markedly. For example, in 1950 it was US\$1 million and in 1958 it was US\$61 million. Between 1960 and 1970, annual oil production more than doubled. Between 1974 and 1980, production remained level but income rose substantially due to the much higher oil price post-1973. In 1977, Qatar fully nationalised onshore and offshore operations and awarded service contracts to the former concessionaries.

Exports of hydrocarbons generated great wealth for the ruler, but they also generated further demands by members of the Al Thani family for increases in their allowances and for adding additional members to the civil list. One way the rulers in the 1950s and 1960s sought to mitigate these demands was by appointing the lobbying

relatives and their followers to posts in government. While this allowed them to enrich themselves and their followers through the awarding of contracts and jobs, it also led to a dysfunctional, bloated and bureaucratic public sector. Heads of agencies were reluctant to coordinate or streamline activities as this would limit their opportunities for gain. The ruler's policy of appointing family members also did not have the desired goal of reducing inter-family politicking. Instead, it provided the appointees with increased funds and supporters from which they could continue to mount challenges. This approach would only change in the 1970s with the accession of Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad as the ruler.

The re-commencement of oil operations in the late-1940s increased Britain's interest in Qatar. At that time, British priorities for Qatar were for it to expand its oil production, for British companies to have the contract to produce and export this oil, and to keep foreign states out of Qatar. For this to occur, Qatar needed to be stable and have a system of administration which, at the very least, exercised sound financial control and maintained security. Britain also recognised that the Qatari ruler would have to provide basic services such as municipal, transport, electricity, water, communications, education and health services, if he wished to maintain his rulership. Qatar also needed to be able to protect its borders, an issue which had become more important with the discovery that oil exploration parties from the US-owned Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) were visiting the southern part of the Qatar Peninsula in 1949.

The first stage in developing a modern administration, according to Britain, was for the ruler to hire British advisors. These would establish the needed fiscal control, a police force and then other core government functions. The ruler agreed to this plan in 1949. To provide local oversight of British interest and to 'advise' the ruler on policy, in 1949 Britain appointed a resident Political Agent to Doha. From this point onwards, until 1971 when Qatar became fully independent, Britain would continue to pressure the ruler to develop his administration and make policy that aligned with both Qatar's and Britain's interests.

Oil changed the country's demography enormously. The oil sector required large numbers of workers, and as money flowed through the state, so too did demand for workers for construction, domestic, commercial, hospitality and technical work. This labour demand could not be met by the domestic population, and consequently, numbers of expatriate Arabs and south-west Asians came to Qatar. In 1953, Qatar's population was 25,000 and by the late 1970s, it had grown to 250,000 of which just 50,000 were Qatari.

This influx had three inter-related security implications. One was that the expatriates brought with them political ideas of pan-Arabism, anti-British and Arab partisan interests. These fostered political awareness among locals, which included anti-monarchical views. Another was that the expatriates employed in large industrial enterprises organised collectively to advance their pay and conditions. The third was that the foreign influx created a dynamic of Qataris versus expatriates – leading to protest and confrontation as the former sought to be privileged over the latter. The definition of a Qatari national was formalised in 1961 in the citizenship law which stated that a Qatari national was a person who had been resident in the country since 1930. This definition allowed both long-term settled Qatari and many Bedu who moved between Saudi Arabia and Qatar to claim Qatari citizenship.

1920–1949: PRE-MODERN SECURITY

In 1871, the Ottoman Empire conquered the major oasis town of Al Hasa in modern-day eastern Saudi Arabia. This brought neighbouring Qatar under Ottoman control, and to secure its influence there, the Ottomans stationed a small garrison in Doha. In April 1913, Ibn Saud conquered Al Hasa with support from the Ikhwan, and negotiated the surrender of the garrison at Al Hasa. The Ottomans consequently withdrew their forces from both Al Hasa and Doha.

Before the Ottoman withdrawal, Britain was the principal maritime power in the Arabian Gulf and exercised considerable influence over parts of the southern Gulf coast, notably Kuwait, Bahrain, the Trucial Coast, and Muscat and Oman. Britain would have preferred Qatar to be in its sphere of interest but accepted the Ottoman presence to avoid open confrontation. Within a few months of the Ottoman forces leaving Doha, the ruler of Qatar, Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammad Al Thani, died. The ruler had nominated his fourth son, Abdullah, as his successor but a number of his brothers and cousins challenged this. To bolster his position, Abdullah sought an external ally. Britain was anxious to consolidate its power in the area and was willing to assist. Thus in 1916, Britain and Abdullah signed a treaty which recognised Abdullah as the ruler of Qatar, and Britain committed itself to protecting the ruler, his subjects and his territory from aggression by sea, and Britain's 'good offices' if attacked by land. The latter clause of what became known as the Anglo-Qatar Treaty of 1916 meant that Britain was not committed to providing protection from land attacks, only to provide reasonable assistance however Britain defined this. In return for the security guarantees, the ruler committed himself and his successors to suppressing slavery, piracy and the re-exporting of weapons, as well as agreeing to not engage in maritime conflict with other British protected states, such as Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The treaty also allowed Britain to establish a political representative along with a British post office, telegraph and aircraft landing grounds. In addition, the treaty prevented Qatar from having relationships with other foreign powers or granting them access to land without the express approval of Britain.

An element of the treaty was that the ruler was allowed to import weapons, but only for his personal use and the arming of his dependents and tribesmen in order to maintain order and frontier protection. Given these conditions, the treaty suggested that this could be up to 500 rifles. As the ruler had limited funds, he only exercised his right infrequently, notably in 1918 when he imported 450 carbines, and in 1927 when he imported 500 carbines.

With the signing of the oil concession agreement in 1935, the ruler received an immediate payment from the oil company of 400,000 rupees and 150,000 rupees annually thereafter. This gave him the money to ask Britain for additional weaponry. That year he asked for not only rifles, but also armoured cars equipped with machine guns. Britain agreed to provide 500 0.303 SMLE rifles but Britain considered that the armoured cars should not be provided as they would undermine, rather than enhance, security. If the vehicles were used to patrol the contested Qatar-Saudi border, the Saudis would see it as a provocation and possibly retaliate. If the cars were seen in the Zubarah area, they would inflame tensions with Bahrain, again potentially leading to conflict. Rather than denying the request outright however, Britain sought to simultaneously delay a decision and argue that lorries carrying light machine guns would be adequate.

The increasing threat of war in the late 1930s saw Britain's view on supplying weapons to Qatar change. In 1938, Britain initiated the

development of a regional defence plan which included Qatar and all the other Gulf Arab protected states. In the case of Qatar, the plan formalised the existing approach. That is the ruler was responsible for local security including border control, Britain would not base any forces in the state, and British forces would only deploy if absolutely necessary in the face of a significant external attack. To enable the ruler to better fulfil his security responsibilities as per the 1916 agreement, the plan called for the ruler to use trucks mounted with machine guns, supported by the ruler's traditional security forces of armed retainers, slave and ex-slave bodyguards, and if he faced a larger threat, mobilised allied Bedu and settled Qataris.

The British Political Agent in Bahrain asked the British military authorities for machine guns for Qatar. What he received in 1942 were eight Italian Breda Modello 38 machine guns, apparently from captured Italian armoured vehicles as they had top-mounted box magazines and a pistol style grip. When they arrived in Bahrain, they came with no ground or vehicle mounts, meaning bespoke fittings would have had to be made so that they could be fitted on trucks. By the time the guns arrived, the Axis threat to the Gulf had ended so the guns were not given to Qatar. They would remain in storage in Bahrain for the entire war.

In 1947, the ruler of Qatar renewed his request for more small arms plus 'armour-clad vehicles mounted with machine guns and heavy guns'. The ruler expressed interest in Bren gun carriers, seeing the six used by the oil company as tractors. The request for armoured vehicles was rejected by Britain, again because of concerns over the reaction from the Saudi and Bahraini rulers.

In principle, Britain thought that rifles and machine guns should be supplied. In Bahrain, the option of supplying the Bredas in storage was considered, but ultimately rejected for a number of reasons. Firstly, there were neither tools nor spares for the weapons, secondly it would be difficult to obtain 8mm ammunition in the future and lastly, it was not advisable to burden the RAF, which would be expected to supply an armourer, to build mounts and maintain the weapons. Rather than continuing to keep the Breda guns in storage, the British Resident in Bahrain authorised that they be dumped at sea.

When it came to supplying rifles, Britain faced a dilemma. It wanted to supply a sufficient quantity to ensure the ruler could maintain internal security and fulfil his responsibility to provide oil field security. However, Britain also wanted to avoid an excess amount of weapons in Qatar for the ruler already had some 500 rifles purchased in the late 1930s, more than enough for his estimated 400 retainers. A particular concern for the British at that time was the possible leakage of arms from Qatar to Palestine as this would undermine Britain's mandate control there.

The reason why the ruler had requested the arms was the growing threat to both his position and his nominated heir, his son, Sheikh Hamad bin Abdullah, as well as rising public disorder. Both issues were linked to members of the Al Thani family who were robustly demanding an increased share of the country's oil revenue. Over the 1940s, the ruler's son Sheikh Hamad bin Abdullah had effectively become regent, much to the chagrin of his older brother Ali. Hamad died unexpectedly in May 1948 sparking a succession crisis. The ruler now nominated his son Ali to be successor, but this was challenged by other descendant lines. Complicating the transition were demands by members of the Al Thani family for increased allowances given that the ruler had received another boost to his income in July 1949 in the form of the first concession payment for offshore exploration rights. Some family members were threatening to riot if their demands were not met.

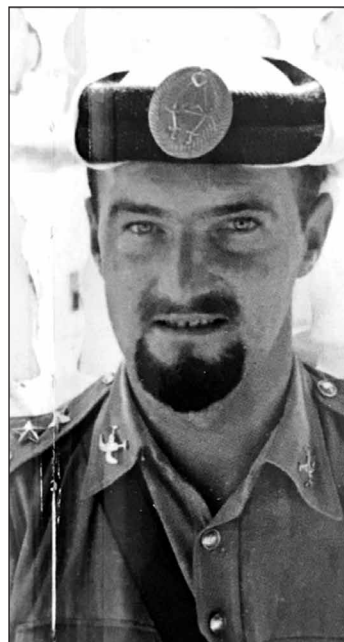
Fearing that his son would not be successor and his immediate family would suffer, the ruler approached the British for assistance. Britain saw this as an opportunity to get the ruler and his successor to agree to changes that it considered necessary to build a stable and developing state. These included immediately establishing fiscal control of the ruler's expenditure and a professional police force. As the ruler was increasingly distressed over inter-family politics and security issues, he was willing to abdicate immediately and allow his son, Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah, to take over. The British agreed and recognised Sheikh Ali as the new ruler. He committed himself to the Treaty of 1916 and agreed to engage British advisors to establish a financial system and police force in August 1948. To provide a visual endorsement of Britain's support for the new ruler as well as to deter demonstrations planned by discontented ruling family members, a landing party from HMS *Flamingo* were present at the signing ceremony. To better advance British interests, a permanent Political Agent to Qatar was also appointed, ending the arrangements where visits were made to Qatar from the Political Agency in Bahrain.

1949–1956: THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF THE QATAR POLICE

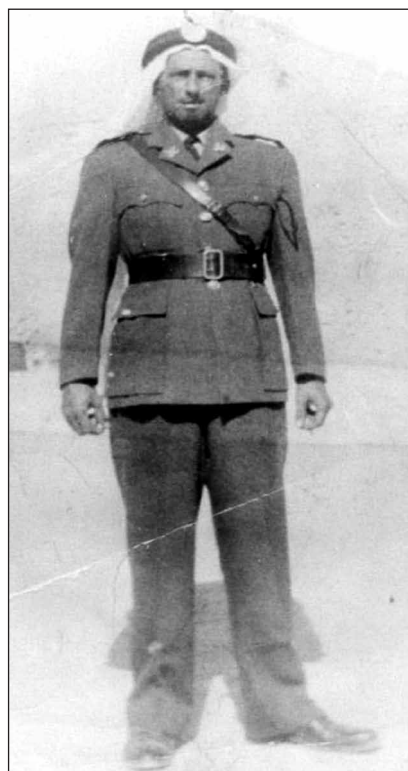
The formation of the Qatar Police started with arrival of the ruler's new police advisor, Ronald Cochrane, in August 1949. Cochrane had served in the Northamptonshire County Police from 1932 to 1945, before joining the Bahrain State Police in 1945 rising by 1949, to the rank of inspector and serving as the police force's Deputy Commandant. The ruler of Bahrain initially loaned Cochrane to the ruler of Qatar as part of efforts to defuse the Bahrain-Qatari tensions over Zubarah and the Hawar Island archipelago. The Qatari ruler recognised Cochrane's ability and quickly offered him an employment contract. Cochrane accepted and was appointed the Commandant of the yet-to-exist Qatar Police in 1949.

The immediate plan for the Qatar Police was to build a force of around 250 men equipped with 0.303 rifles and Webley .38 revolvers. While negotiations were underway with Britain over the supply of small arms, the ruler of Bahrain agreed to a British request to loan 75 Mark IV 0.303 rifles for Qatar. When the ruler of Qatar found out that the weapons had come from the Bahraini ruler he characterised this as Bahrain meddling in his internal affairs. The weapons were promptly stored by the Qatari ruler rather than given to his police. In the meantime, Cochrane was able to access some of the 500 rifles the ruler had bought in the late 1930s. The British finally offered Mark IV 0.303 rifles but the ruler wanted the cheaper and older rifles with the Pattern 1907 bayonet, as the 'older fashioned longer bayonet ... impresses the locals.'

During 1950, the police force numbers grew to 90. Its headquarters was in the Doha fort on the western edge of the town, with police posts and stations established in the Doha *souq*, at Dukhan and at Mesaieed. The police also provided permanent guards at key facilities in Doha. Guarding oil facilities was then not the responsibility of the police but the responsibility of a member of the Thani ruling family and his guards. For example, guarding of the oil facilities at Dukham was the responsibility of Sheikh Nasir bin Khalid bin Ahmed Al Thani and his 100 guards and was paid for this service directly by the oil company. The police also created police posts in sensitive border areas such as an early example on the western coast near Salwa. The Qatari police post was located a few kilometres to the north of the Saudi police post at Salwa settlement, then consisting of just a few *barasti* (palm frond) huts. Another police post was established near Zubarah fort in February 1953. To maintain communications with its police posts and as an early



Lieutenant of the mobile force within the Qatar Police in field dress, 1950s. He is wearing the early Qatar Police headdress badge, as well as crossed daggers collar badges. Note the white *shemagh* wrapped around the *aqal*. The crossed daggers collar badges were later used as major rank insignia. (Ali Albuhaqab)



Officer in the Qatar Police wearing winter dress, 1950s. He is wearing the early Qatar Police headdress badge and white *shemagh*, as well as crossed daggers collar badges. (Ali Albuhaqab)

warning against Bedu and other raids, around this time the Qatar Police established a radio network across the peninsula.

As the Qatar Police developed in the 1950s, it became responsible for a range of tasks including supervising traffic at busy intersections, vehicle and driver licensing, issuing passports, managing immigration and firefighting (known as civil defence). In 1952, the Qatar Police took over responsibility for guarding the camps of the Petroleum Development (Qatar) Ltd.



Qatar Police guard at the entrance of the ruler's Al Rayyan Palace in 1957. Note he is wearing 1937 Pattern webbing with small cartridge carriers. The rifle is a Mark III .303 SMLE and a 17-inch Pattern 1907 bayonet. (Qatar Ministry of Interior)

To assist in building the police, Cochrane engaged small numbers of Britons to fill leadership and technical posts. One of these was Superintendent Jack Briggs, who served as the Qatari Police's second-in-command from 1951 to 1963. He had served with the Bahrain Police from 1949 to 1951, and before that with the British

Army, the Palestine Mandate Police and the British Police. He would go on to be the Commandant of Dubai Police from 1965 to 1998.

The ruler's lack of encouragement for Qataris to join the Qatar Police meant Cochrane had to hire expatriates – notably Omani Dhofaris, tribesmen from the Colony of Aden and neighbouring areas, Pakistanis, and Baluchis from Oman, Persia and Pakistan. A consequence of the expatriate nature of the police was that the ruler would not support the use of them against Qataris. This significantly undermined the effectiveness of the police. An early instance of this was in June 1951 when Qataris working for the oil company staged a strike protesting against the Dhofaris also working for the company. The latter had been given Qatari residency/citizenship papers, which Qataris disagreed with as they were not Qatari and were believed to be taking the jobs of 'real' Qataris. At this time, almost 50 percent of Qatar's police force was Dhofari. Rather than letting the police deal with the protest, the ruler intervened using his retainers and negotiated a settlement. Part of this settlement appears to have included getting the oil company to deport its Dhofari workforce and reducing the number of Dhofaris in the Qatar Police.

Over the next 12 months, the Qatar Police filled the departed Dhofari ranks with expatriate Gulf Arabs. In 1952, the Qatar Police consisted of around seven British contract officers plus one Qatari officer (Mohamed Abdullah Al Atiyah, a cousin of the ruler). In addition to the Gulf Arabs who made up the bulk of the police's NCOs and constables, it also retained some Adenese. By mid-1953, the Qatar Police was 300 strong.

Improving opportunities for Qataris was just one cause of a series of oil strikes and protests during the early 1950s. Another cause was in response to inept decisions of the oil company, such as when the company forgot to issue the workers with their coffee rations, and making Muslims work on a Muslim holiday. A further problem was agitation by dissatisfied Al Thani family members who wanted to bring pressure on the ruler so as to improve civil

list allowances. These had been set as a fixed amount in 1950 as part of an agreement by the ruler and Britain which saw oil revenue being allocated using the formula of one quarter going to the ruler, and three quarters to the government account. From the government account, one-twelfth of oil revenue was allocated to ruling family members. The allowance per person was a fixed amount, with the closer relatives to the ruler obtaining more. With oil income increasingly rapidly in the early 1950s and the growing domestic demand driving inflation, members of the extended ruling family wanted increases in their allowances. The ruler did not agree and while Britain believed he should increase the allowances, it did not push the issue for fear that the ruler would turn to Saudi Arabia for security support and side line Britain. By 1952,



The Commandant, Qatar Police, Ronald Cochrane (in police uniform) with Group Captain (ret.) PL (Phillip) Plant, advisor to Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah Al Thani, inspecting the Qatar Police at Police Headquarters in June 1954. In the background is a barrel of a 2-pounder Daimler armoured car. (HC.HP.2018.0264-0045, reproduced from the collection of Qatar National Library)



Personnel of Qatar Police's armoured cars standing in front of Ferret Scout Cars. The head of the two-troop force was Superintendent AO (Alex or 'Jock') McGinlay, MC. He is in the centre wearing sunglasses, circa 1956. The armoured cars were manned by British NCOs and Pakistani crews. (HC.HP.2018.0263.0064, reproduced from the collection of Qatar National Library)

disgruntled ruling family members were increasingly exploiting public disorder to put pressure on the ruler, and concerningly, had imported a number of automatic weapons. The ruler passed a decree banning the open carry of weapons in Doha, and in 1952 requested the police to prevent the further illegal import of arms. Due to the ruler's limited support for the police when dealing with Qataris, these decisions were not well enforced. However, sometimes the ruler made exceptions to this general policy and used the police against fellow Qataris. An example was in 1954 when the ruler instructed the police to arrest an Al Thani member following a family quarrel.

By the mid-1950s, the declining health of the ruler coupled with the stress of the strikes and continual demands from the extended Al Thani family saw the ruler handing over more responsibilities to his second son, Ahmed bin Ali, effectively making him the regent. In 1956, the ruler and the regent finally recognised that failing to support the police was undermining their own interests. That year the country saw a rise in nationalistic, pan-Arab and anti-British sentiments, plus increased lawlessness including sabotage of oil pipelines and theft of material from oil facilities. In addition, there were complaints by the Al Thani family over the power of one particular merchant family who had become very wealthy due to its relationship with the ruler, and the way in which this merchant family excluded the broader Al Thani family from profitable construction and contracting work. In August 1956, motivated by the Suez Crisis, a crowd of 2,000 oil workers and Qataris marched through Doha in protest, supported by a number of high-status Qataris allied with Arab nationalists. So concerned was the regent that he ordered his armed retainers to disperse the crowd. Britain was likewise concerned and had a naval ship standing by with a landing party ready to deploy into Doha. In October 1956, another politically motivated strike occurred at both Mesaieed and Dukhan. This was in protest against the arrests of leaders of the Algerian National Liberation Front by France.

Recognising that protests were getting increasingly political and had spill-overs into Doha rather than being contained on distant

oil fields, the ruler in October 1956 called in the extended Al Thani family and told them that the police now had his full backing, and he would not allow a breakdown of public security. To formalise the power of the police, the ruler signed new decrees which regulated the police for the first time. This was a turning point in the history of Qatar's security as the ruler had ended his reliance on the old system of armed retainers and tribal allies, and now depended on the Qatar Police and its newly established small armed wing. The initial plan for the wing as of 1953 was to create a 200-man strong mobile force equipped with armoured cars and supported by truck-mounted light infantry. It would be commanded by a British officer who would be supported by

four British NCOs. Four Daimler armoured cars equipped with 2-pounder cannons were obtained, and in the second half of the 1950s, these would be augmented by four Ferret scout cars. Four Ordnance QF 25-pounders were also obtained although only two were useful on the battlefield with the others, being for ceremonial purposes as they had no recoil mechanism.

1957–1968: GROWTH AND MILITARISATION OF PUBLIC SECURITY

Starting in 1957, the regent increasingly took a harder line against strikes and protests. He also sought to neutralise nationalist demands by privileging Qataris for employment and via the requirement that all foreign firms must place orders through Qatari businesses. Despite these efforts, there remained widespread criticism about the uneven sharing of oil wealth outside the inner Al Thani family and its favoured merchants, plus the slow growth in public services.

The ruler's extravagant expenditure on himself and his inner family, and his preference for living abroad attracted considerable contempt by Qataris. In May 1960, an attempt was made on the ruler's life by one of his relatives while he was holidaying in Beirut. This finally ended the ruler's interest in remaining as the head of Qatar, and he promptly abdicated in favour of the regent, Sheikh Ahmed bin Ali. However, the powerful *bani* Hamad branch of the family objected to this transfer and instead wanted to see rule pass to one of its line, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad. To gain family support for Sheikh Ahmed bin Ali to become ruler, the family agreed that Sheikh Ahmed bin Ali would become the ruler but the subsequent ruler would not be Ahmed's son but Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad. To formalise this arrangements, Sheikh Khalifa was made the Crown Prince. It was also agreed that there would be a new formula for the civil list, consisting of one quarter of hydrocarbon revenue going each to the ruler and to the civil list, and one half to the government.

As of the mid-1960s, the strength of the Qatar Police was 750 personnel including 16 British contract officers and 15 Arab officers. There was also a small but growing number of Qatari in the force,

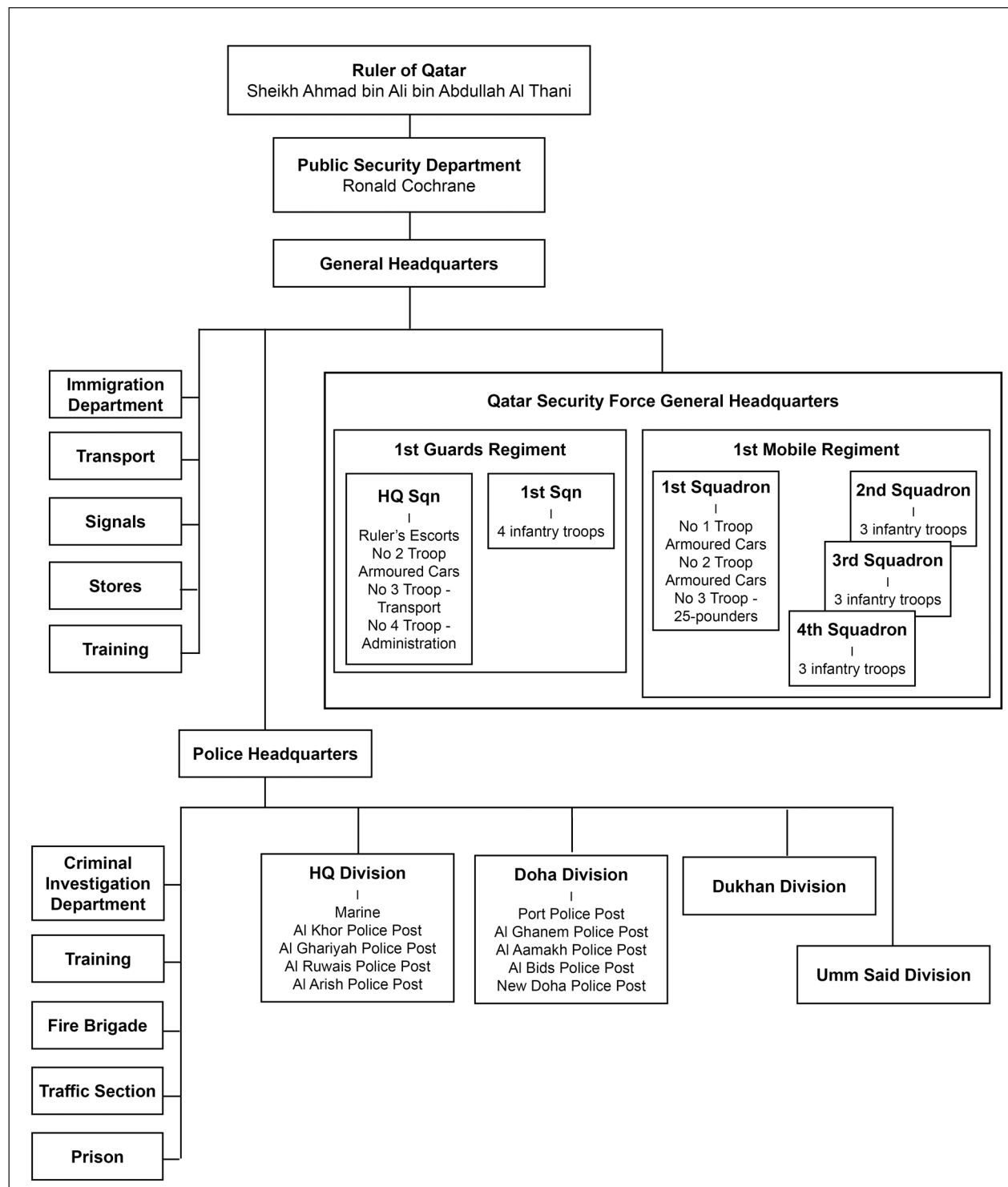


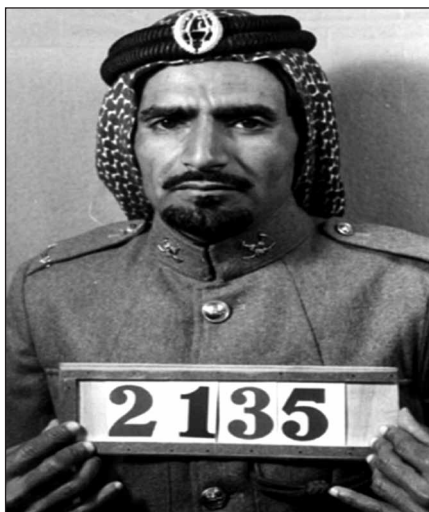
Diagram 8: Organisation of the Qatar Public Security Department, July 1963. (Diagram by Athol Yates)

which had the benefits of increasing the police's legitimacy when used against Qataris, as well as providing gainful employment for local Bedu who had been complaining about their lack of opportunities. The force's armed wing had been modernised and up-armed. In 1960, four Saracen armoured personnel carriers had arrived, as had four Saladin armoured cars, each carrying a 76 mm L5A1 gun. The Saladins replaced the ageing Daimler armoured cars for which spares were becoming increasingly difficult to obtain. Infantry weapons ordered or delivered from 1959 to 1961 included 7.62mm machine guns and 54 Bren guns, 16 2-inch mortars, and No. 36 grenades. Six 3.5-inch anti-armour rocket launchers were also obtained, as were four Bedford 3-ton GS trucks. Qatar also wanted to buy more advanced weapons including the towed 120mm

MoBAT anti-tank recoilless rifles, Vigilant anti-tank missiles and Jet Provost light strikers. Britain considered that to supply these weapons would lead to an excessive strain on Qatar's financial resources, risk a regional arms race, and potentially, leak out of police control. The British were particularly concerned about the MoBAT recoilless rifle. Britain's Foreign Office opposed this sale as it would create an internal security risk by equipping a 'not entirely reliable police force' with a weapon which could knock out the armoured cars on which the ruler principally relied on for the maintenance of order. A specific concern was that the weapons could be used by one Al Thani faction against another. Given these concerns, Britain delayed and finally denied these requests.



The ruler, Sheikh Ahmed bin Ali Al Thani, with two Qatar Police officers standing behind him, late 1950s or early 1960s. The police sergeant has a high collared jacket, with crossed daggers as collar badges. The officer has the circular-type collar badges. Both policemen are wearing berets with the early Qatar Police headdress badge. A felt backing is worn behind the badge. (Ali Albuhaqab)



A policeman in winter dress in the late 1960 or early 1970s. He is wearing the Qatar Police headdress badge with the winter red and white *shemagh*, plus high collared jacket. On his epaulets is the Qatar Police silver shoulder title. (Ali Albuhaqab)

Around 1961, the police were restructured. A new security entity was formed called the Public Security Department, headed by Ronald Cochrane. Its main elements were the Qatar Security Force, the Qatar Police and the Immigration Department. The structure as of 1963 is shown in Diagram 8.

The Qatar Police, headed by Commandant R.G. (Ron) Lock, fulfilled the traditional role of a law enforcement agency. Its main elements were a Criminal Investigation Department (responsible for investigating all crimes), four geographic police divisions, a training school, fire brigade, traffic section and a prison.

The Qatar Security Force was in effect a combination of a royal guard and an army. The Qatar Security Force consisted of two



Police officer in the 1960s. He is wearing a white *shemagh* with the police headdress badge on a black *agal*. His jacket lapels are cross daggers. Note his black lanyard and white *shemagh*. (Ali Albuhaqab)

formations – the Emiri Guard Regiment headed by Lieutenant Colonel Mohamed Al Atiyah, and the Mobile Regiment, headed by a Briton. Both regiments were organised along standard British Army lines and had three or more squadrons, each of which had three troops, with each troop having three sections. The Emiri Guard Regiment was responsible both for providing close personal protection to the ruler, his immediate relatives and visiting VIPs, and for guarding the palaces of the ruler and his inner family. It also had a reserve of men for other duties. The main base of the regiment was at Al Rayyan which was the location of many Al Thani residences. The Mobile Regiment provided guards and patrols for the oilfields, border areas and other outlying parts of the country. It maintained both an armoured squadron and squadron for internal security duties. This regiment also had a 25-pounder artillery troop.

While the new oil wealth sharing formula was to a degree popular with the Al Thani family, it was not so with the general population as it resulted in a reduction in funds allocated to state development and social services. Simmering discontent erupted into organised protest in Doha following an incident at a public celebration of the proposed union of Egypt, Syria and Iraq in April 1963. Annoyed that his car was being held up by the celebration, an Al Thani member fired into the crowd, killing one person. Outraged, a number of groups formed around the National Unity Front which organised a week-long general strike. Its political demands included curtailing the privileges of the ruling family, reducing expatriate labour and providing better services to Qataris. Rather than negotiating, the ruler ordered the police to arrest protesters, including 50 notables. Punishment of those leading and supporting the strike included exile, with several of those exiled being Al Thani members. The successful public security response to the 1963 unrest reflected a larger and more capable security force. By 1968, the Public Security Department had grown to a total of nearly 2,100 uniformed personnel, with the Qatar Police having 1,080 men and the Qatar Security Force having 1,100 men. The department had a mix of Arab, British and Pakistani officers, with around 12 British officers. Most British officers only remained for a few years as the wages were low compared to other Gulf police forces and the living conditions were more difficult in Qatar.

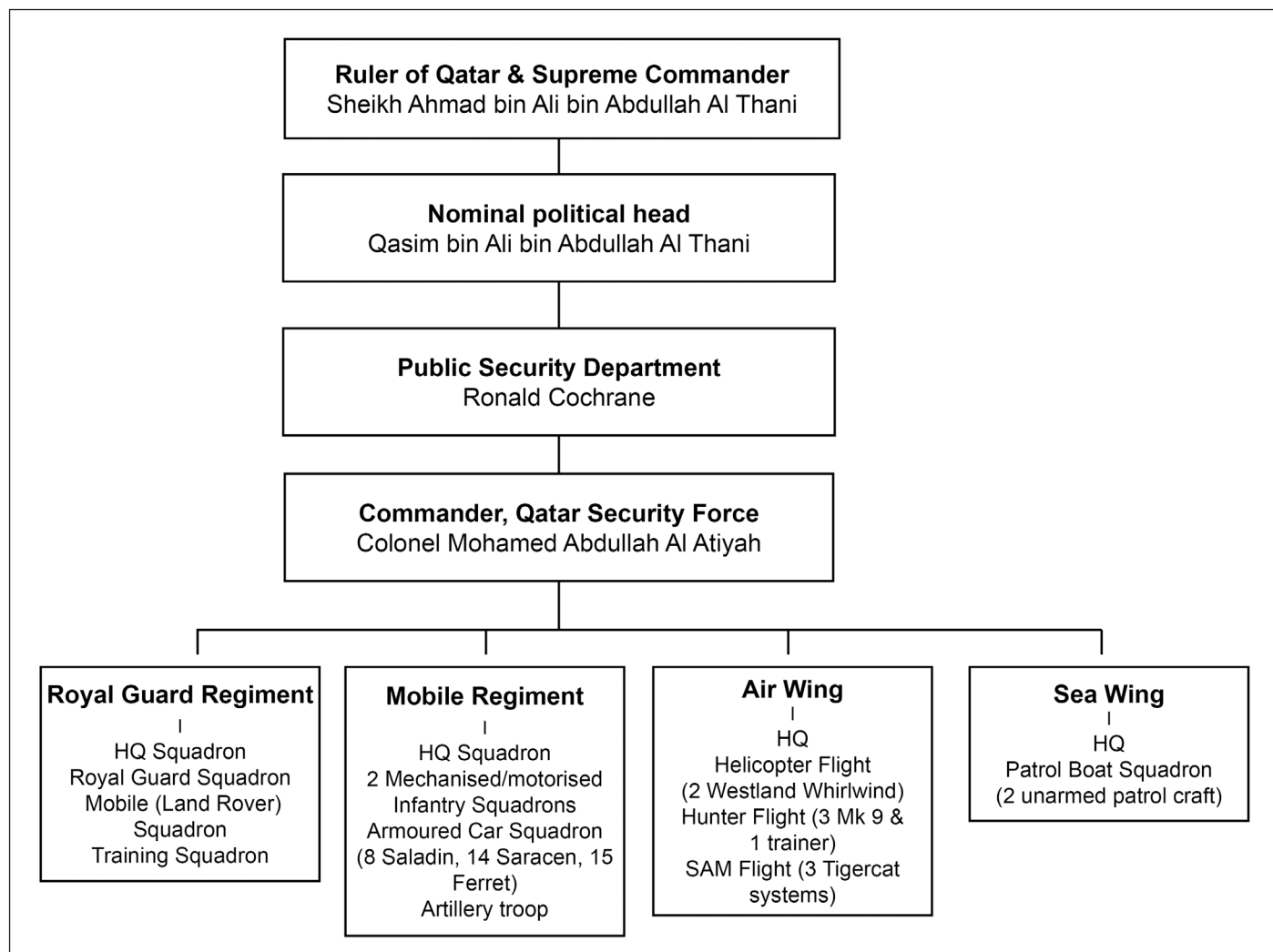


Diagram 9: Structure of the Qatar Security Force, early 1971. (Diagram by Athol Yates)

1968–1969: EXPANSION AND REFORM OF THE PUBLIC SECURITY DEPARTMENT

In June 1967, tens of mostly Yemeni and Yafi (a western Aden tribe) policemen at the Public Security Department's fort headquarters protested over the perceived support of Britain for Israel in the Arab-Israeli War fought from 5 to 10 June 1967. This mutinous act shook the ruling family and the Crown Prince, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad, who led a committee to prevent such incidents from occurring again. The committee was made up of the heads of Public Security Department (Cochrane), its military element (Mohamed Al Atiyah) and its police element (Loch). An early change to the Public Security Department was to reduce the number of Yemenis and Yafis, which at the time made up nearly 50 percent of the department's 2,000 men. Around 50 of the more activist Yemeni/Yafi were dismissed immediately, and through resignation and running out of employment contracts, about 200 left within a few months. Increased effort was put on recruiting men from local Bedu tribes, with Omani Dhofari, Yemeni and others from southern Arabia no longer hired.

Reforming the Public Security Department became increasingly important following Britain's January 1968 announcement that it would withdraw its military forces by 1971. Britain wanted the Crown Prince to prioritise improving the department's countersubversion and terrorism capabilities. However, the Crown Prince was more interested in building up the department's armed wing, recognising that within three years Qatar needed to have the ability to defend itself without British support. Another probable consideration for

the Crown Prince was that if Qatar wanted to join the proposed union of Bahrain and the Trucial States, he needed an impressive military to give him leverage in the union's negotiations. While the Deputy Commander British Land Forces Gulf, Colonel Fletcher, advised the ruler to form a separate military with an establishment of 1,850 men consisting of one guard and three infantry regiments, an artillery battery, a training depot, a logistic group and an air wing, the ruler decided to build it through the Public Security



Qatar Security Force, 1960s. The vehicle is a clone of a Jeep CJ-5 made in the Gun Carriage Factory Jabalpur, India. The grill appears to be from a Nissan Patrol 4W66. The vehicle is armed with a Bren gun. (Ali Albuhaqab)

Department. He did accept the advice to establish an air wing and a maritime wing, although both would be managed under the Qatar Security Force and would support the department's armed and police forces. The structure of the Qatar Security Force as of early 1971 is shown in Diagram 9.

Land force equipment obtained between the end of 1968 and the beginning of 1971 included nine Saracen armoured personnel carriers, 10 Ferret scout cars, 30 Saladin armoured cars, 81mm mortars and Carl Gustav 8.4cm recoilless rifles.

The Qatar Air Wing started in March 1968 when two second-hand RAF Westland Whirlwind HAR-10 helicopters arrived. They were used for transport, VIP movement and search and rescue. To establish ground attack and basic air defence capabilities, in 1971 Qatar obtained three rebuilt Hawker Hunter F.Mk 78 aircraft and a T.Mk 79 (T-7) trainer. It also obtained in 1970 three Tigercat ground-to-air short-range air defence systems and 75 missiles. Each system consisted of a three-round, trailer-mounted launcher towed by a Land Rover with a second trailer carrying fire control equipment. However, it appears that the Tigercats were never operational due to a lack of parts and missiles, maintenance problems and operating difficulties.

The late 1960s saw the Sea Wing formed, and its roles included intercepting vessels carrying illegal immigrants, as well as preventing other smuggling activities, notably gunrunning. At this time, its craft consisted of just a handful of unarmed small patrol boats although it had started to look for several high-speed, sea-going vessels. In the late 1960s, the Qatar Police expanded and modernised. The existing Police Training School grew to accommodate larger numbers of recruits and to start to offer refresher and in-service courses. Another change was the establishment of a company-sized (100 men) riot unit equipped with Saracen Armoured Control Vehicles and around 10 Shorland armoured patrol cars each fitted with a 7.62mm turret-mounted machine gun. The Criminal Investigation Department was expanded, and planning started for the establishment of a security intelligence organisation tasked with countering subversion, espionage and terrorism. In effect, this became Qatar's Police Special Branch. Over time, it would become independent of the police and be known as State Security Police.



A member of the Qatar Security Force, early 1970s. He is wearing the Public Security Department headdress badge, khaki field dress uniform and brown beret. He is carrying the Self Loading Rifle (SLR) with 20 round magazine at the 'shoulder arms'. (Ali Albuhaqab)

1970–1980: MODERN SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS

By the late 1960s, the ruler, Sheikh Ahmed bin Ali Al Thani, had become increasingly disengaged with decisions about the state and was frequently absent. Consequently, policy decisions were increasingly made by the Crown Prince, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad. One of his significant decisions was to modernise the government in 1970 which involved rationalising the large number of government entities. In the security sphere, this resulted in the creation of the Ministry of Interior which absorbed the internal security and law enforcement components of the Public Security Department. The Qatar Armed Forces were also formed which was in effect a renaming of the Public Security Department's Qatar Security Force.

In 1970 and 1971, Qatar faced the decision on whether it would become either a fully independent state or part of a Gulf Arab federation. The Crown Prince wanted independence while the ruler wanted to join the federation. While the ruler was vacationing in Switzerland in September 1971, the Crown Prince announced Qatar would be an independent state. In February 1972, when the ruler was hunting in Iran, the Crown Prince announced that he had deposed the ruler, a position supported by key elements of the Al Thani family, Britain and Saudi Arabia.

The new ruler made a number of changes to rein in the extended Al Thani family's influence including reducing civil list allowances. He accelerated governmental reforms including giving formal jurisdiction and responsibilities to the ministries. To ensure that the leadership of government entities supported the new ruler, he replaced a number of the former ruler's descendant line members and their supporters. To increase public support for the new ruler, he also allocated a greater share of the budget to social programs including housing, education, health and pensions.

Over the 1970s, the ruler consolidated his power by placing his sons and brothers in positions of authority. Despite this, when the ruler nominated his son, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa, as his successor in 1977, there were some protests from other branches of the Al Thani family. While this did not escalate at the time, the family dispute over succession may have had a role in the foiled 1983 plot to blow up a meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council in the Sheraton Doha, potentially killing the ruler and Crown Prince.

THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

The Ministry of Interior was established in 1970 but it took until 1972 before its first Minister of Interior was appointed – this being one of the ruler's brothers, Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad bin Abdullah Al Thani. The former head of Qatar Police, Lock, was appointed an advisor to the Minister, and the new head of the police was one of the ruler's nephews, Sheikh Hamad bin Qasim Al Thani. The Ministry of Interior would grow to around 2,200 personnel in 1976.

In the early half of the 1970s, the air and sea wings of the former Public Security Department provided services both for the Ministry of Interior and the Qatar Armed Forces. In 1974, the Ministry established its own dedicated air wing, receiving in that year two Westland Gazelle helicopters which replaced the Westland Whirlwinds. In 1978, two more Westland Gazelles were delivered. These were used both for surveillance and as light transport aircraft. In 1978, they were supplemented by three or four Westland Lynx Mark 28 aircraft, which were tasked with maritime surveillance and rescue.

The Ministry's Sea Wing consisted mostly of a small number of inshore vessels, such as Fairey Spear patrol craft. It focused on countering illegal maritime migration, border patrolling and search

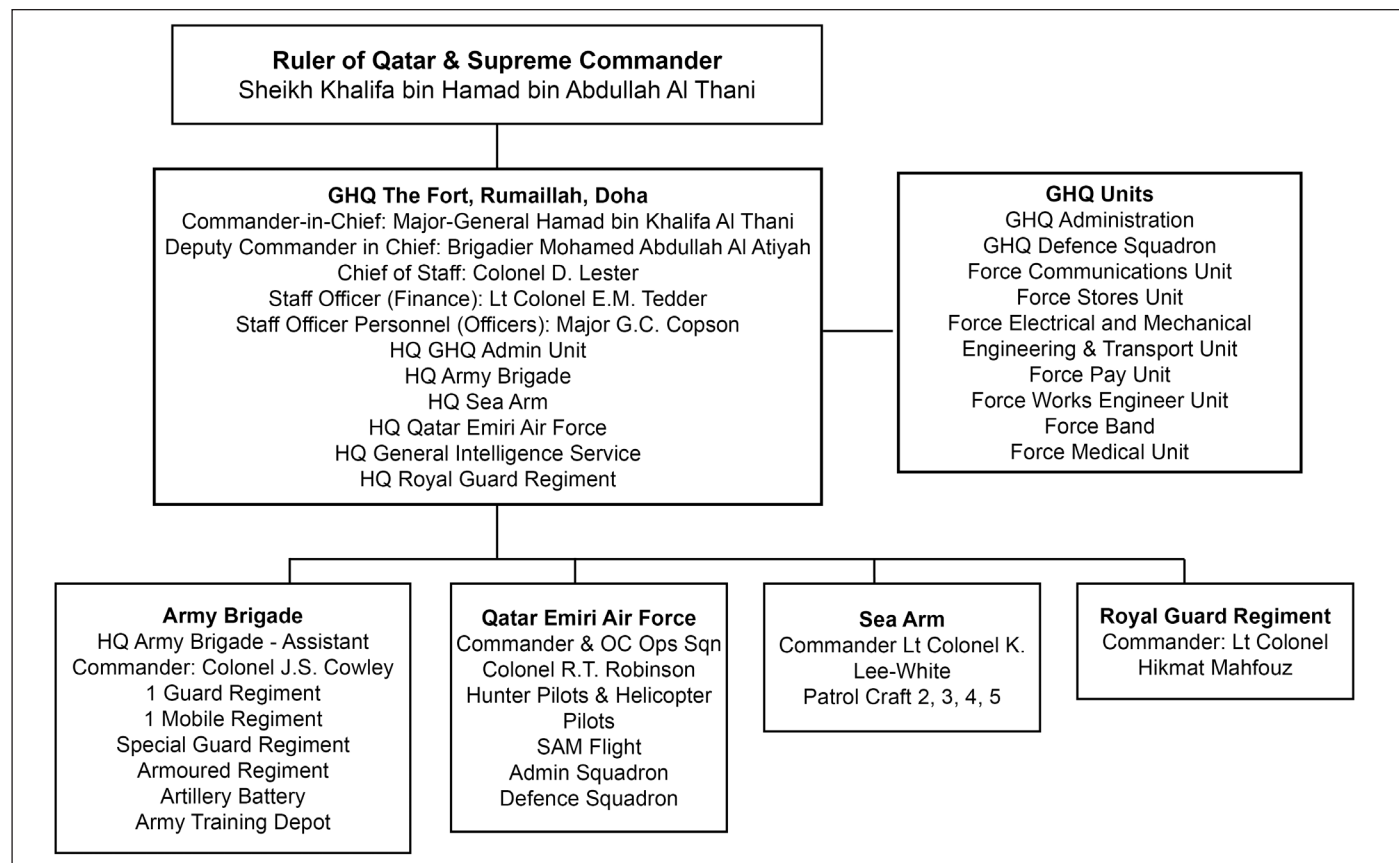


Diagram 10: The structure of the Qatar Armed Forces, 1974. (Diagram by Athol Yates)

and rescue, often in conjunction with the air wing of the Ministry of Interior.

QATAR ARMED FORCES

The Qatar Armed Forces was formed in 1971, with what was in effect a renaming of the Qatar Security Force. The Provisional Constitution of 1971 made the ruler formally the Supreme Commander of the Qatar Armed Forces. With the accession of Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani in February 1972, the ruler sought to ensure that the leadership of the force was loyal to him. He removed the departmental head of the Qatar Security Force, Qasim bin Ali bin Abdullah Al Thani. He appointed his son, Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, to the post of Commander-in-Chief. Sheikh Hamad was then a 20-year-old Sandhurst graduate, and now ranked at Major General. Sheikh Khalifa also promoted the long-serving Qatari officer, Mohamed Abdullah Al Atiyah, to the post of Deputy Commander-in-Chief with the rank of brigadier. The new ruler also removed Cochrane from operational control of public security and military forces, and made him an advisor. To build support in the armed forces for the new ruler, he ordered a 20 percent increase in the salaries of military personnel.

The ruler upon his accession recognised that he needed an effective military capable of defending his state given the unresolved border issues with Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Britain offered advice on the expansion of Qatar's military and the ruler accepted this. Seeing opportunities for British military sales, the Assistant Military Deputy to the Head of Defence Sales, Brigadier R.H. Purvis, was tasked with producing an expansion plan. The plan, delivered in June 1972, made recommendations on the force's overall organisation, unit establishments, equipment and efficiency measures. Britain was particularly keen for large sales, including for the Jaguar close air support and reconnaissance aircraft (which Qatar never purchased). The ruler accepted most of the recommendations.

The structure of the Qatar Armed Forces in 1974 is shown in Diagram 10. It consisted of a GHQ, an army brigade group, an air force, a naval force and an Emir Guard regiment. The most senior officer heading GHQ was the Commander-in-Chief, Major General Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. Reporting to the GHQ was a military intelligence element known as the General Intelligence Service. Its role covered both within-force security functions, such as vetting of personnel and physical security, and national security, notably intercepting and arresting incoming suspected terrorists, and surveilling dissidents.

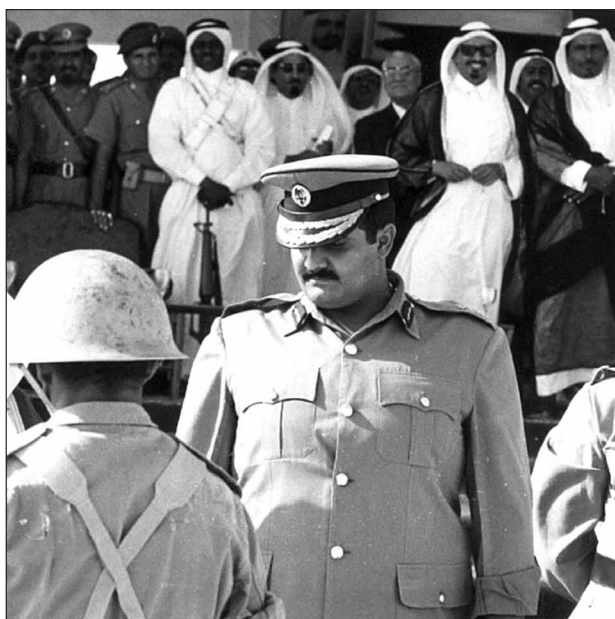
The 1970s saw a number of ruling family members join the Qatar Armed Forces, with some rising rapidly to hold key posts. One was another of the ruler's sons, Abdullah bin Khalifa Al Thani. He graduated from Sandhurst in 1976, and by the end of the decade he was Assistant Deputy Commander-in-Chief, a title which underplayed his considerable influence within the military. In 1977, a Ministry of Defence was established. The ruler's son, Hamad, became the Minister of Defence in addition to his existing post of Commander-in-Chief.

During the 1970s, the officer corps of the Qatar Armed Forces was made up of Qataris, British, expatriate Arab and Pakistani personnel. In 1972, there were 19 Britons in the military (one seconded officer plus one naval, eight army and nine air force contracted officers). As new equipment arrived, the number of Britons increased and by 1974 Britons filled the following senior positions: Chief of Staff (Colonel Derek Lester), Chief Staff Officer-Finance (Lieutenant Colonel E.M. Tedder) and Senior Officer Personnel-Officers (Major G.C. Copson). Britons also headed up the Army Brigade Group (Colonel J.S. Cowley), the air force (Colonel R.T. Robinson) and the sea force (Lieutenant Colonel K. Lee-White). The force also had numbers of seconded Jordanian officers, with the most senior post in 1974 being Assistant Chief Staff Officer-Training, Security and Operations (Lieutenant Colonel Mohammed Sadeq Hemoud Elmoumani).

Seconded Pakistani officers served in the guards and armoured regiments, as well as in both the air and naval forces where they worked as pilots and patrol craft captains respectively. The force's enlisted personnel came from over a dozen Arab and south Asian countries with the majority being Saudi, Baluchi and Pakistani. The military would continue to rely heavily on enlisted foreigners during the 1970s, particularly for soldiers and technicians. By 1980, the strength of the Qatar Armed Forces was around 9,700 personnel.

Army

The land component of the Qatar Armed Forces in the 1970s was structured as a brigade group. By 1974, the brigade group consisted of the 1st Guard Regiment (three infantry squadrons, HQ squadron and mortar troop), the 1st Mobile Regiment (three infantry squadrons, HQ squadron, mortar squadron and pioneer troop), the Special Guard Regiment (one squadron plus HQ squadron), the Armoured Regiment (two squadrons), an Artillery Battery (one troop) and the Army Training Depot.



The ruler, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani, wearing military uniform as Qatar Supreme Commander, Qatar Armed Forces 1970s. The soldier in front of the ruler is wearing a British steel helmet and 1937 Pattern webbing. Behind the ruler is one of his armed guard (probably from the Royal Guard Regiment) and who has an M16. (Ali albuhaqab)

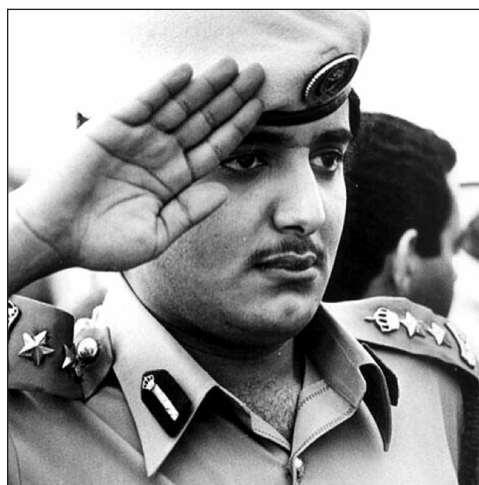


The ruler, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani as Commander-in-Chief wearing a brown beret, red gorget rank tabs and a red lanyard over the left arm. His jacket is finely woven khaki material. The uniform is complete with a light khaki shirt and a light brown tie. (Ali Albuhaqab)

In the mid to late 1970s, significant volumes of weaponry were ordered of which most were French. For the first time, Qatar obtained tanks (24 AMX-30B tanks, arrived 1977) and an armoured recovery vehicle (AMX-30D, arrived 1977). It also introduced tracked infantry fighting vehicles (18 AMX-10P, arrived 1977–78), tracked armoured personnel carriers (10 AMX-VCI, arrived 1980), and tank destroyers (24 VAB-VCAC each fitted with a launcher for four HOT anti-tank missiles, arrived 1980–82 with the HOT missiles arriving mostly in 1982–83). Qatar also purchased 138 VAB-VTT wheeled armoured personnel carriers and variants (arrived 1980–82). These included command post variants as well as VAB-VPM-81 mortar carrier versions. Artillery capability was enhanced with the delivery of six self-propelled guns – the 155 mm self-propelled gun Mark F3 on a modified AMX-13 light tank chassis (arrived 1980–83). Twenty EE-9 Cascavel armoured cars from Brazil were purchased, with their original 37mm gun being replaced by a French 90mm gun and fitted with an infrared night-fighting system (arrived 1979).



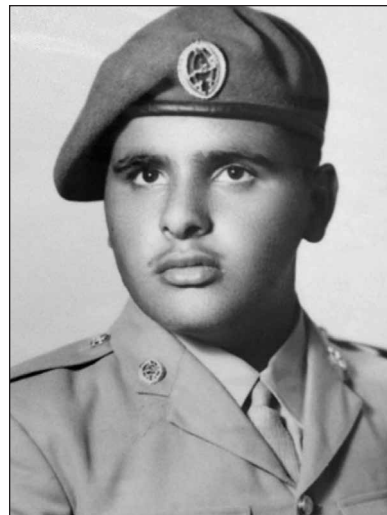
The ruler, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani. The formation sign on the right arm is the Hamad Armoured Regiment, and is divided diagonally with the top being maroon and the lower segment being white. The whole is superimposed with a black falcon. (Ali Albuhaqab)



Colonel of the Qatar Armed Forces, 1970s. Black berets were worn for armoured units, green for the Royal Guard Regiment, and khaki for other units. Working dress was khaki shirt and trousers with black boots and desert boots for officers. (Ali Albuhaqab)



Qatari Flight Lieutenant displaying his pilot wings on his tunic. (Ali Albuhaqab)



Soldier of the 1970s. He is wearing the military cap badge and the smaller collar badges of the same design. (Ali Albuhaqab)

Armed Forces Ranks			
British equivalent	Bahrain	Kuwait	Qatar
Field Marshal	<i>Mushir</i>		
General	<i>Fariq Awwal</i>	<i>Fariq Awwal</i>	<i>Fariq Awwal</i>
Lieutenant General	<i>Fariq</i>	<i>Fariq</i>	<i>Fariq</i>
Major General	<i>Liwa</i>	<i>Liwa</i>	<i>Liwa</i>
Brigadier General	<i>Amid</i>	<i>Amid</i>	<i>Amid</i>
Colonel	<i>Aqid</i>	<i>Aqid</i>	<i>Aqid</i>
Lieutenant Colonel	<i>Muqaddam</i>	<i>Muqaddam</i>	<i>Muqaddam</i>
Major	<i>Raid</i>	<i>Raid</i>	<i>Raid</i>
Captain	<i>Naqib</i>	<i>Naqib</i>	<i>Naqib</i>
First Lieutenant	<i>Mulazim Awwal</i>	<i>Mulazim Awwal</i>	<i>Mulazim Awwal</i>
Second Lieutenant	<i>Mulazim Thani</i>	<i>Mulazim</i>	<i>Mulazim</i>
Warrant Officer I	<i>Wakil</i>	<i>Wakil Awwal</i>	<i>Wakil dabit awwal</i>
Warrant Officer II	<i>Raqib Awwal</i>	<i>Wakil</i>	<i>Wakil dabit thani</i>
Staff Sergeant	<i>Raqib Awwal</i>	<i>Raqib Awwal</i>	<i>Raqib</i>
Sergeant	<i>Raqib</i>	<i>Raqib</i>	<i>Nayib</i>
Corporal	<i>Arif</i>	<i>Arif</i>	<i>Arif</i>
Lance Corporal	<i>Jundi Awwal</i>	<i>Wakil Arif</i>	<i>Wakil Arif</i>
Private	<i>Jundi</i>	<i>Jundi</i>	<i>Jundi</i>

The second half of the 1970s saw the Army establishing a special forces unit – the Rangers. The Army's establishment strength in 1976 was around 1,600. By the beginning of the 1980s, it had grown to around 4,000 men.

Air Force

The Air Force of the Qatar Armed Forces was established in 1974. Named the Qatar Emiri Air Force, its initial core aircraft were three rebuilt Hawker Hunter F.Mk 78 fighter-bombers and one Hunter T.79 two-seat conversion trainer which had been delivered to Qatar's security forces in 1971. These were augmented in 1975 by a single Britten-Norman BN-2 Islander light transport aircraft and three Westland WS-61 Sea King Commando-2A helicopters for troop transport, plus one Commando-2C for VIP transport.

In 1979, Qatar ordered six advanced trainer jets (Dassault-Breguet Dornier Alpha Jet 1A, arrived 1980–81), which could also

be used for ground attack, and in 1980 it ordered 15 Mirage F.1 light multi-purpose jet fighters (Mirage F.1EDA version, including two Mirage F.1DDA, delivered in 1983–84). Weapons for the Mirages included Matra R.530 medium- and Matra R.550 short-range air-to-air missiles.

Naval Force

The formation of the Qatar Armed Forces' naval force started with the arrival in 1972 and 1973 of four British small patrol craft, probably two Keith Nelson 45ft craft. In 1972, Qatar ordered six 120-ton, 110ft patrol ships from Vosper Thornycroft fitted with two 40mm AA guns. These Barzan-class vessels were delivered in 1975 and 1976. They were named Q11 *Barzan*, Q12 *Hwar*, Q13 *That Assurai*, Q14 *Ak Wusaail*, Q15 *Feten Al Khair* and Q16 *Tariq*. In the early 1970s, the leadership of

the naval forces was British. However, with the need for further personnel for the additional vessels, Qatar turned increasingly to Pakistan for seconded officers who served as patrol boat captains and in onshore technical posts.

In 1980, Qatar ordered three, 56m fast attack missile craft, Combattante IIIM-class, from the CBM Shipyard in France. These were equipped with 76mm OTO, 40mm Breda and 30mm Oerlikon guns, and eight MM-40 Exocet SSM. The vessels (*Damsah*, *Al Ghariyah* and *Rbigah*) were delivered in 1983 and 1984. Another order in 1980 was for two truck-mounted Exocet batteries for anti-ship use and these were delivered in 1983. This expansion would lead to manning difficulties as there was an ongoing shortage of crew and a heavy dependence on Pakistani and Egyptian personnel for maintenance and crews.

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MUSEUMS AND ARCHIVES

Bahrain Military Museum and Library
 Bahrain Police Museum
 Kuwait Police Museum
 National Archives, Kew
 Qatar Digital Library
 Qatar National Library, Heritage Collection



Sheikh Ahmed bin Ali Al Thani, Ruler of Qatar with Colonel Mohamed Abdullah Al Atiyah, Commander, Qatar Security Force looking at a lieutenant of the Royal (Amiri) Guard who is carrying a British Webley .455 revolver in a canvas holster with six shell loops and cleaning rod. He is wearing the Royal Guard patch on his left arm, which is included in the colour section. 1968. (HC.HP.2015.0010-1209, reproduced from the collection of Qatar National Library)

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